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RUSSIAN ENGINEER

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BY
JOHN R. WESTGARTH

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John R. Westgarth.

Russia - Travel &
Description

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FOREWORD

“ THE NEW RUSSIA ”

THE popular conception of the New Russia is one so glorious and promising that it is with considerable trepidation I try to remove the scales from the eyes of those people who have firmly convinced themselves that even if Russia is not a free and happy country at the moment, everything is being done for the worker and he eventually will reap the benefit.

Is it not perhaps pertinent to ask who are the mysterious beings who are “ doing things ” for the workers ?

Most of us are familiar with the use of the term “ THEY ” as indicating some powerful and mysterious force which always seems to be doing things—we have such “ powers ” in Britain. In the same class, I presume, are the people who are doing things for the workers of Russia. To conjure up visions of men and women of great genius devoting their lives to making the world a fit place for the worker to live in. Thus the Soviet Government, in company with their capitalist counterparts, become invested with the glamour of heroes who are changing the history of the world, and are solving problems

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that have been with us for thousands of years. Unfortunately the Bolshevich leaders live for power just as much as any foreign autocrat.

The caste system in Russia is the strongest in the world. Between the worker in the factory and the field and the Communist autocrat, his master, is fixed a deep gulf which very few can cross. Just one "Mameluke," it is said, escaped from the historic massacre of that body by leaping his horse over a wall, and just in the same way one proletarian worker here and there might leap over the ever-widening rift which divides him from the Lords of Communism, his masters.

Almost any man might hope to enter Buckingham Palace or receive the honour of presentation to His Majesty the King of England. But the Russian worker might as well hope for the good dinner which he has not tasted for ten years, as to be admitted to the Kremlin and converse with the arrogant oligarchs there.

There is no novelty in the Russian system. This extraordinary talk we hear from time to time of a great experiment can deceive only those who are abysmally ignorant of history. The day when the Russian Communist Party will be restricted to the sons and members of the Russian Communist Party is almost with us. Then the circle will be narrowed so that it can only include the eldest sons, and the caste, of the growth of which I have witnessed the embryo stage, will have taken the final step in the age-old development of all aristocracies.

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Let me repeat that it is already hopeless for the ordinary Russian worker to attain admission to its ranks. If he is a man of good physique he may perhaps be tempted into the Red Army by the more generous food allowance which Red Soldiers receive in the service. His interests will be more bound up with those of his masters and he will become a member of that mercenary band on which before long the Communist aristocracy must rely to maintain it in possession and power. I do not anticipate a counter-revolution in Russia. In due course a Tsar will sit again on the throne of Muscovy, but he will be a new Tsar descended from a family which "came over" with the Bolsheviks. He will be surrounded by a privileged class which will be able to point to similar pedigrees.

After I saw the hungry workers of Kuzenitsk and observed the fraternal manner in which the Communists allocated to themselves the best of food, clothing, furniture and housing accommodation, I could not bring myself to believe that the workers' trust in their leaders was such that they would regard the most astounding blunders as examples only of some deep-laid and brilliant plan for their ultimate benefit. The explanation of it all came only after many weary months in Russia and when I myself had felt the iron hand of the Soviet.

There is no *public opinion* in Russia !

In that sentence you have the answer and the key to the whole problem of modern Russia. There was no public opinion in the Tsarist times and revolution

came about only when a handful of extremists—most of them clever and astute men with foreign experience—took advantage of the miseries of the populace and set their passions ablaze. Russians followed the revolutionary leaders not from any sense of patriotism or desire to free themselves from oppression; their whole attitude was mirrored in their need for food. They had none or very little and looked forward to rioting and looting as a means to getting nourishment.

For a long time Russia was in a state of chaos, interventionists and the Whites were giving battle to the ragged legions of the Red Army. Wandering bands of brigands toured the countryside and wreaked their will and vengeance on all and sundry. There was no law, and no enthusiastic public to form itself into a trained band to uphold the rights of the citizens.

Let us skip the events that followed and come down to Russia at peace again, looking forward to her complete reconstruction under the new conditions of Comradeship and Equality. In supreme power were the members of the Communist Party, who skilfully organised things so that any attempt at counter-revolution would meet with failure. All classes of the community were marshalled, registered, allotted food rations, given jobs and assigned places in which to sleep. Bureaucracy triumphed. From wildness of revolt, the people settled down to the drudgery of communal life.

The ultimate objective of the Five Year Plan was

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to compass by economic warfare the destruction of the capitalist world. This became clear to anyone taking part in the working of the plan, but one of the things man had to learn was that the Communists simply had not the brains to carry out the gigantic task to which they had set their hands.

Long before the Five Year Plan developed, the Communist Party had quietly determined that if the Plan failed within the allotted time, it would be continued for another five years, and another if necessary. Throughout its workings the men and women who represented the masses must starve and live under intolerable conditions. This did not matter ; in fact nothing mattered so long as the Communist remained in control.

The Communist Party has been held up as a band of idealists who deny themselves everything that their people cannot have. This is not true. Stories of Stalin taking off his coat and joining with the manual workers in digging a ditch are absolute nonsense. I have seen practically every leading member of the present "Bolshevic Aristocracy," but the Dictator himself keeps pretty well away from the people, whom he regards merely as machines to carry out his will. Peters, Rozengoltz, Gurievitch, Lapse and a score of others have talked with me and it is to some extent possible to gauge their mentality.

In the majority of cases no Communist leader is content with a plainly furnished office. He usually selects the largest and most ornate in his department and furnishes it with every available stick of decent

furniture. The cars at the disposal of officials are carefully graded. Those of high standing all have Rolls-Royce machines. Farther down the scale expensive American models are given out, then come cheap tourers, until finally the minor official has a Russian-made model which usually gives him so much trouble that he prefers a tram-car.

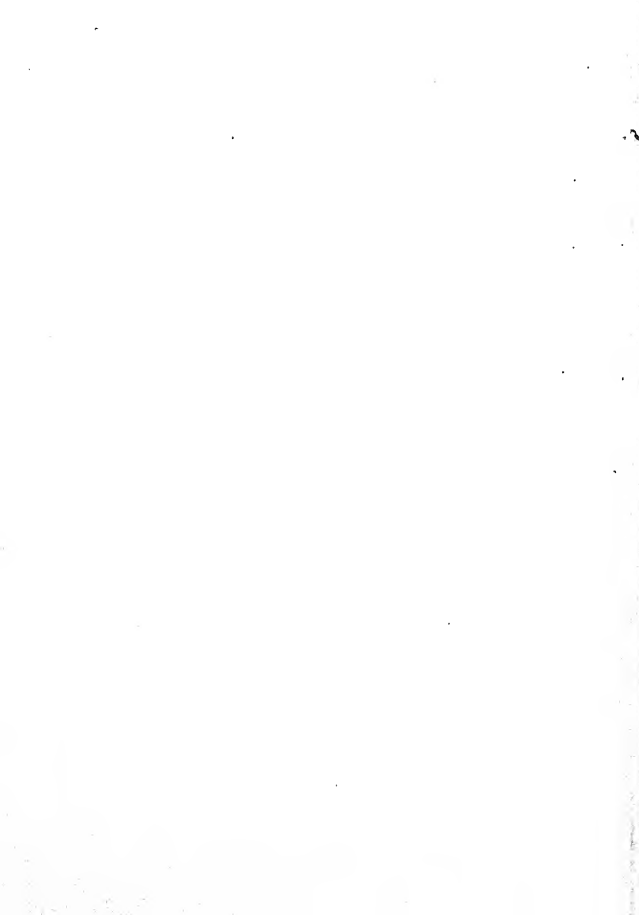
One might think that in fraternal Russia, cars would be at the disposal of sick workers. This is not the case. The worker has no more chance of riding in a car, kindly issued him by a benevolent State, than he had of borrowing the Tsar's state coach for the afternoon. What is more, he must not even dare suggest that the cars be used for this purpose. During the revolution he was encouraged to imagine all sorts of things—that he would have food, luxuries and plenty of money—but now he finds himself merely bowing to an oligarchy, which is daily becoming more and more exclusive.

Giving a truthful and impartial account of Russia to-day, I feel it my duty in these pages to say a word of warning to that very large number of people who, unemployed in their own country, speak of going to Russia. It is quite true that Russia is in urgent need of professional men, engineers and skilled tradesmen, but no matter what their condition in this country, nobody of those classes should even consider a Russian contract. If they do so, they will find that any Russian contract is worth very little in Russia and that they may well be severing themselves entirely from England if they hearken to

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Russian promises. The Soviet wants to get professional workers into Russia, and to keep them there. Every attempt will be made to persuade the worker to part with his passport, or even to accept Soviet citizenship, and should he do so, he will be committing himself to lifelong imprisonment in a country which is a gigantic gaol. The simple truth is that only a few dozen people outside Russia know exactly what conditions are in that country, and the Soviet has done its best to muzzle them. How is it possible for a conducted tourist, carefully shepherded by the O.G.P.U. men and loyal Communist interpreters, to get an inkling of the real truth? The people who do know are shut up within the Soviet boundaries, and care is taken to see that they remain there. It is because of these extraordinary precautions, and because of the real efficiency of the Communist system of conducted tours, that only a distorted view of the real Russia can be obtained by the casual visitor—some people seem to think that the sacrifices of the Russian people were justified in the hope of success of the Five Year Plan.





RUSSIAN ENGINEER

CHAPTER I

WHY WE WENT TO RUSSIA



ONE of the first questions English readers will ask concerning this book is :—" Why do our countrymen go to Russia if it is indeed the awful picture it is painted ? "

I propose to answer that question by simply stating my own experience prior to my decision to try my luck in the land of the Soviets. No country can be called kind in these days of unemployment, and while I have no grouch against my native land, its failure to provide me with employment was the primary factor which led me to offer my services to the Government looked upon as a pariah by every civilised state in the world.

After successfully completing a two years' contract under the Mysore State Government, South India, and a three years' contract for Tata Co., Ltd., in North India, I returned to England, and approached all possible avenues without success—from scores of large private firms to the Crown Colony Offices. I must admit that the latter's rejection of my various applications on the ground of my being forty-one years of age annoyed me considerably. Twelve months passed and my financial resources

felt the strain of the position; this could not go on much longer. . . .

There was one country I had not tried—Russia. Well, I had heard that that great nation was planning a vast scheme of reconstruction. Why not try them? Perhaps they might find some use for the services of a man who knew his job, but who could find no one in his native land to utilise his services. No sooner had the idea struck me than I presented my credentials to the Russian Embassy.

Even at that early stage I had some inkling of the inefficiency which permeates anything connected with the Soviet. The officials could give me no information whatever, although finally one did suggest that I try the “All Russian Co-operative Society,” the famous or infamous “Arcos.”

It took me quite a long time to learn from a succession of well-dressed, lethargic officials at the Moorgate offices that no engineers were required in Russia. Experience had inured me to disappointments, but it had also taught me never to take “No” for an answer. I recalled that Mr. Saklatvala, then Communist Member of Parliament for Battersea, had been a department manager of Tata Limited, London, and a letter to the Communist brought quick results and an invitation to talk matters over at the House of Commons. Saklatvala, a typical Parsee, met me in the Lobby. He greeted me effusively. We adjourned to the luncheon room, where, surrounded by several famous Parliamentary figures, I was introduced to his secretary, Bishop

by name. Months later I was to learn that this was a typical Communist gesture. No good Communist cares to say anything save in the presence of a third party—of his own choice. It was odd indeed that in the Mother of Parliaments I should make my first contact with Communists and Communist methods.

Saklatvala was brief and to the point. He ordered tea. "Well, Mr. Westgarth. What is it you want?" he queried, arching his grizzled brows over his deep-set eyes.

"I want to go to Russia—to work," I replied bluntly.

Saklatvala, for all his keenness, had apparently forgotten the main points in my letter.

"Interesting," he mused, "but what have you done before?"

When I told him of my connection with Tata's he was immediately interested and for the next hour he devoted himself to a discussion, interspersed with many questions to myself, regarding the firm. Suddenly he changed the subject and brusquely asked me why I thought I would be of service to Russia. I answered that I believed I could assist them to organise iron- and steel-works construction on an economic basis, citing previous experience in similar work. He turned abruptly to Bishop and dictated a letter to the late E. F. Wise, C.B., director of the Russian trading organisation, Centrosoyus. While he was speaking a man immediately recognisable as Ben Tillett entered with the unmistakable J. H. Thomas.

"Hullo," Tillett remarked cheerfully to the Communist. "Glad to see you've got out of gaol."

Saklatvala merely nodded curtly, and concluded the letter, which I promptly accepted and registered to Mr. Wise. As I shall have plenty to say about Soviet inefficiency, and the refusal of practically everyone connected with Communism to accept the slightest responsibility for anything, I propose to pass over the ensuing months of writing, telegraphing and interviewing. Suffice to say that two years after my meeting with Saklatvala I received two letters from Russia direct, signed by Lapse, head of the trade unions organisation there and one Podсахodnikov, chief director of the Kuznetsk scheme. Both letters informed me that my services were required by the Soviet, and further they wished to know what conditions we required and invited us to the Soviet Union to talk matters over—and would I state the expenses needed for my trip to Moscow.

Shortly afterwards I received instructions from Moscow asking me to proceed there via Berlin, and enclosing a draft for £40 on account of my expenses. In London, arranging for passports, I was explicitly warned that H.M. Government could not accept responsibility for us in Russia, as at that time diplomatic relations were broken off as a result of the Arcos raid. I replied that I was prepared to take a chance, and went to the House of Commons to obtain certain signatures to facilitate collection of my passport. There I was introduced to Miss Ellen

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Wilkinson, then member for East Middlesbrough, who seemed to possess the stock Socialist opinion of the Soviet. She was very interested when she learned we were going to Russia.

"The best advice I can offer you," she told me—and I remember wondering at the time why politicians are so ready with advice when they have no practical experience of the subject under discussion—"is not to go to Russia unless you have the worker's viewpoint. If you do not always take it while you are there you will find yourself in trouble."

"By the way," she added, "you know there are no diplomatic relations, so that if you should be in difficulties wire me at the House of Commons and we will raise H——." From the Commons I went on to Saklatvala's private residence, where, after three years of disappointment and difficulty, I was not prepared for the conversation which he tried to begin. He said we must get down to business. "You are going to Russia," he began in the tones of a great man addressing an only son who is starting out in the world, "and you will want to get into your work and forget everything else."

"Now forget that for a moment," I said, "I have a complaint to make. I particularly asked Bishop to arrange my travelling expenses. How on earth do you expect me to leave money with my wife and go to Russia with my son and return on £40?" He was nonplussed. "But what do you want to

return for ? ” he asked. “ Aren’t you going to stay out there ? ”

I then made it perfectly clear that I had no intention of burning my bridges, or of turning my back on my native land never to return. However, in the end, he told me that he would arrange for Bishop to meet me the next day.

Bishop was at first apologetic, and told me that he thought £40 would have been ample for our immediate expenses and then made an astounding suggestion. “ Look here, Mr. Westgarth,” he began, as though he had found a panacea for all my ills. “ Your wife has a number of very nice rings, and, no doubt, quite a lot of other jewellery. I know a pawnshop where she would get first-rate value and she could easily live on the proceeds while you were away. We Communists often have to do that, you know.”

When I recovered from my astonishment, I bluntly told him that I was no Communist, but merely an engineer going to work for a responsible Government. Finally I agreed to go to Moscow and told Bishop that I would see to my own expenses from Berlin onwards. He seemed quite satisfied with this suggestion, and departed wishing me all sorts of luck, although—I am glad to say—he did not play the heavy father after the style of his chief.

I did not see Saklatvala again until the return from my preliminary trip to the Soviet Union. When I did he seemed disappointed at the trend of events and I have often wondered whether he, like

so many other foreign Communists, was not really very much in the dark as to the true conditions in that country. Again and again foreign Communists blind themselves to the most elementary facts when discussing their "promised land." Although they have never been within a hundred miles of Russia, and know absolutely nothing about the country, they cling to their cherished beliefs with a fanatical faith that would make a mediæval churchgoer ashamed of himself. The Soviet abhors—and fears—religion, but its own believers are far more blindly faithful than the most rabid Christian. Saklatvala, knowing little of Russia but absorbed in his beliefs, treating any deprecatory reports as "capitalist propaganda," was doubtless sincere in his own ideas of Russia. Well, I hope to make it abundantly clear in these pages that Russia is no land of plenty, no "worker's paradise" and certainly no country for any Englishman, no matter what his circumstances at home, to contemplate visiting, with a view to selling his talents to the greater glory of the Soviet Union.

So ignoring all the events which succeeded my last meeting with Bishop until my arrival in Russia, I shall try to lift the veil of misrepresentation, and show the reader the Soviet as I saw it.

CHAPTER II

“ RECONNOITRE ”

IT was with strange and mixed feelings that my son and I commenced our journey to Moscow. We had in our breasts much room for doubt as to the future. Not long before, our Government, exasperated beyond measure at the tactics of the Soviets, raided the offices of the All Russia Co-operative Society (Arcos) and broke off diplomatic relations with Russia. The outcome of those events, as may well be imagined, created anything but good feeling towards the British in Russia. The Soviet Press worked overtime covering the British Government with abuse, and we had grave fears that we might suffer in consequence. However, we could not pierce the veil of the future, and hoped for the best.

On reaching Berlin, I had another glimpse of the astonishing inefficiency that seems to pervade everything connected with the Soviet. We called as requested at the Embassy in the German capital to secure the necessary visas to enable us to proceed to Moscow. I have had much experience of foreign Consulates and offices, but never have I been met with such sheer ignorance and indifference and an

utter disregard for the elementary principles of business. A clerk saw me as I entered the building. What did I want ? As briefly as possible I told him, producing my Russian documents, and expecting a speedy transaction. I was disappointed. The clerk handed me over to a lady, obviously acting as consul, who sat in a large room overlooking the street. She knew nothing about my proposed visit to Russia. I replied that this was not surprising seeing that I was taking my orders direct from Moscow, but suggested that a perusal of my correspondence with her headquarters should settle any doubts.

Glancing casually at them, she handed them back, and directed me to wait in a corridor outside. Some time later I was taken to another official, who had to refer me to the previous one. Then he found that the lady was out and I had to wait until her return. Finally, exasperated beyond endurance, as my train was leaving within the hour, I said that if I did not receive immediate attention, I would report the entire matter to Moscow. This brought instant action and a few minutes later I left the building with my papers quite in order.

The first night aboard the train for Warsaw and the Russian border was a bitterly cold one. Snow fell heavily and even in the interior of the train the temperature was none too high. On board we struck a most friendly Irishman, an engineer connected with a British textile firm who was to spend some weeks in Russia supervising the erection of

machinery. The long journey passed pleasantly with this delightful companion, and it seemed only a little while before we neared the border.

An air of tension seemed to pervade the whole train as it thundered toward the frontiers of the most-discussed country in the world. I have no politics, and I am quite prepared to believe that even in Tsarist days travellers felt much the same as did our passengers that night. Russia has always been something of a land of mystery, as different from its European neighbours as chalk from cheese, and I am bound to admit that my spirits fell slightly as that strange pall fell over our train.

However, we drifted into another cheerful conversation with our Irish friend and tried to thrust it from our minds. A little later all conversation ceased and a dead silence reigned amongst the passengers, broken only by the roar and rattle of the carriage wheels. Slowly the train came to a halt. We were at the portals of the Soviet Union. The Polish guards descended to surrender possession to their counterparts of the Red Army. Amidst the banging of doors and the gruff voices of the Red soldiers the passengers remained silent. I have experienced no such atmosphere of tense expectancy anywhere. The shrill note of the whistle, the sound of the skidding loco. wheels as they took the load of the heavy train once again, and we were travelling over Russian soil for the first time. The thud of heavy feet along the corridors and the solemn reiteration of the word "Passport" reminded us

that these would be required of us in a few moments and brought us back to activity.

The examination of passengers' passports was not completed when we reached the first Russian stopping-place, where we were ordered to leave the train and file into a large wooden building, where our luggage was carefully examined. The walls of the shed were draped with numerous red flags, portraits of the national idols, Lenin, Stalin, Rykoff, and many others whom I did not at the time recognise. Amidst a haze of cigarette smoke and the din of human voices, our belongings were searched with great thoroughness. The Red Guards are undoubtedly past masters at the art of searching, and it is really small wonder that the most astute smugglers fail to pass their methodical examination. They examined the newspapers we brought with us with great care ; the fact that they perused most of them upside down made their search of the columns less impressive than it might have been. Suddenly with a fierce shout a big bearded guard seized a yellow-coloured volume from my son's attaché case. His exclamation was in Russian, and an officer with clanking sword and aggressive mien rushed across. For several minutes they conversed excitedly as they examined the volume, on the cover of which was depicted a lurid likeness of what appeared to be a bewhiskered Bolshevick clutching a hapless female in the death grip. Who knows what the guard was thinking ? The picture *was* rather like him, anyway. Then turning to a fellow traveller



who acted as our interpreter he angrily demanded, through him, what the iniquitous volume contained.

As carefully as I could I explained that it was only a novel by the late Edgar Wallace ; although at the time I had the greatest difficulty in preventing myself from bursting out laughing at the fiercely doubtful faces of our inquisitors. Finally I satisfied them, and we were permitted to go aboard the Russian International Wagons Lits and resume our journey to Moscow.

By one o'clock next day we had our first glimpse of the city, which I regard as one of the gloomiest in the world. Everyone seemed depressed in Russia and an air of woe pervaded both train and station as we steamed in. From the distance came the clanging of tram bells, and the hoots of imported British motor buses which cheered us somewhat. We stepped from the train with our Irish friend, who looked about him critically.

"Well," was his final comment. "Thank the Lord I haven't long to spend in this b—morgue."

Hardly were the words out of his mouth, when two smartly dressed civilians who had been eyeing the train passengers very carefully rushed up to him. We were all scared for a second, thinking that there must be something in the hair-raising tales we had heard of the redoubtable O.G.P.U. The first words of the bigger of the two men turned our fear to amusement.

"Ah, Mr. Westgarth," he beamed cordially, "we

are indeed pleased to meet you. Come, your baggage will be attended to, and we shall go to your hotel.”

The Irishman opened his mouth to reply, when the smaller man chipped in. “ Yes, Mr. Westgarth, you must come along and have some lunch.”

This was too much for our Irish friend. In his broadest brogue he told them of their error. They seemed greatly surprised, and when we had been introduced told us that it was the impression in Russia that all Englishmen wore bowler hats and carried umbrellas. The Irishman conformed to both of these unwritten laws, and so the mistake in identities had occurred.

Our reception committee were both in the employ of the O.G.P.U., which organisation is in charge of all tourist business. Coming as we did at the invitation of the Soviet Government with a view to settling in that country for a definite period we had to be well looked after, and we certainly had little to complain of during our initial stay. The larger of the two men was named Koshlakov. His face was pale and very broad, with a mass of jet-black hair brushed well back from his forehead. He dressed very well, and outwardly was a very pleasant type. However, he was an anarchist by persuasion and stood high in the councils of the O.G.P.U., so I was to learn later. Shigaev, his companion, was a pleasant fellow, and though a Communist at the time, was later expelled from the party through the machinations of one Jerome Liftschitz, an interpreter, of whom more anon.

A waiting automobile rushed us to our hotel in the heart of Moscow, and so swift was our journey that we had little more than a glimpse of the passing streets. However, the gloom which had been so obvious since we crossed the frontier was still in evidence, and I could not admit that my first impressions of the Soviet city were at all favourable. But we certainly had nothing to complain of on arrival at the hotel. It was a first-class building, and service was good. An immaculate waiter escorted us to a fine suite of rooms on the first floor. The suite was beautifully furnished and might well have been situated in any other famous capital.

Before leaving, Koshlakov handed me a huge roll of Russian notes which he casually referred to as "expense money," after which he bade us adieu and promised to return to us later in the day. We did not bother to explore the city that day and were still in our suite when they returned.

Shigaev asked whether we had dined, and when we answered in the negative suggested that we partake of a "real Russian dinner." This seemed quite a pleasant prospect, and we invited them to go ahead and order it. Apparently this suggestion suited them admirably, for Shigaev rushed to the telephone and for some minutes shouted animatedly into the instrument.

Soon afterwards waiters appeared and spread the table in our dining-room and then came the most astonishing selection of dishes! I shall not tell the reader what the various courses contained, for the

simple reason, I do not know. One of the courses, however, did consist of a small sucking-pig, whole, even to the eyes, which stared glassily from his braised head. We had a helping of food and wine, but nature forbade us to tackle most of the dishes. The two interpreters thought differently, and ate with a zest. When they left us later in the evening they appeared quite cheerful and normal, in spite of a meal that would have bowled over Falstaff himself.

CHAPTER III

WE ARE TOURISTS

RESUSCITATED by a good night's rest, we viewed Moscow from our suite with brighter feelings the following morning. Everything had been done for us, we reasoned, and if there was any truth in the grim stories we had heard of life in Soviet Russia, the officials charged with the duty of keeping the details from our ears were doing their work remarkably well. I believe that any man, no matter how observant and keen on getting the true facts, would have reached similar conclusions to our own during the early stages of our preliminary visit. In the circumstances, therefore, I scarcely think I can be blamed for having fallen into the carefully baited trap laid for foreign visitors by the Soviet.

Soon after breakfast on the second morning of our stay, the telephone rang and a voice asked us in English to visit the headquarters of the Russian trade union movement, where Lepse, the President, was waiting to meet us. A car was sent in the usual way, and we were whisked through the city to the magnificent Palace of Labour—the Profintern—as the union headquarters is called.

Through a wide stately corridor we were conducted to a lift and escorted through the vaulted council hall to a smaller room leading from the hall, where we found the President seated at a large desk near the window, alone. He rose to greet us, and I saw a striking figure.

Lepse was a Lett ; a tall, spare, keen-eyed man. His head was quite bald, and as he dressed entirely in black, he gave the impression of a monk rather than that of one of the most important figures in the Soviet Union. When he had shaken hands, he fell back into his high-backed chair and commenced to talk, his hands playing incessantly with a long pearl pen-holder. Lepse's fiery eyes seemed to burn as he talked. I could almost picture him in the old pre-revolutionary days, urging apathetic mobs to fury of battle, stirring their souls with his oratory and his consuming personality.

" So, Mr. Westgarth," he said in Russian, which was immediately interpreted by our interpreter Jerome Liftschitz. " You have come to Russia to help us in our steel industry. Now tell me, why is it that England has not the great factories of America ?"

That was certainly to the point, and I tried to defend the interests of my own country.

" England has not the enormous mass-production industries of America," I replied, " but what England produces is good—shall I say the best in the world. Ours is an individualist system, as you are aware, which naturally develops the idea of good craftsmanship, and British steel is the best in the world.

It is obvious, of course, that an island country cannot produce to the same extent as a great continent like America—although I do not think the time far distant when we shall find the British Empire combining to make one great individual unit."

Lepse was interested. "You believe, then," he suggested, "that the British Empire and Russia could work side by side?"

"That is my opinion," I answered. "You have an enormous country which is undeveloped, while we have an Empire, the fringe of which has hardly yet been touched. Take, for example, wood. Russia stands premier in the world; next to her is the British Empire. It is the same with steel. Both units can produce more ore of the type needed for steel manufacture than any other country in the world." We then went on to discuss the prospect of selling America manganese instead of manganese ore, as the former would bring a higher price, resulting in the Soviet Union gaining more foreign currency or dollars. A few months later the suggestion was adopted.

"Please go where you wish in Russia, Mr. Westgarth," he urged me. "We want you to see everything. The Government is responsible for all your expenses."

I thanked him, and we continued with a long discussion in which I tried to bring out the points which had occurred to me since my arrival and when I had been studying Russian conditions before leaving England. Lepse appeared to take a

great interest in what I said, and followed the conversation very intelligently. However, he was an ardent Bolshevik, and it was not long before I realised that he proposed to give me a long disquisition on the benefits of Soviet government.

"Mr. Westgarth," he said, his fingers moving more rapidly about his pen-holder. "You are a technician—a man who understands and appreciates industry. I want you to realise that here in Russia you will have greater opportunities than anywhere else in the world. With us industry is an ideal. We are not concerned with the individual benefit, as are the capitalists of the West. Our great aim is to raise our people to great heights on the stepping-stones of industry. With us industry is to be the servant of the people, and not the people the servants of industry. That, my friend, is the only manner in which our country can be reconstructed. The people, fattened with the fruits of industry, will build a nation that will surpass the world. Capitalism, comrade, writhes in its death throes. You imagine that it is our intention to cause disaffection and strife in other countries. Not at all. We can easily leave that to the people of oppressed nations themselves."

Lepse paused for breath. I was about to interrupt, when he was off again. There is no need to repeat his tirade word for word. The ethics of Communism are too well known to need repetition in these pages. Suffice it to say that Lepse, like most of his fellows, was a fanatic. It is, however, only fair

to add that I believe him to have been sincere. This was brought home to me very vividly a few moments later, when I was explaining my views to him on war.

"Frankly," I said, "I am a worker. Politics do not interest me in the slightest degree. Why should we have wars? Nobody benefits from them. I believe it is high time people stopped talking about wars and settled down to work. What with all the shootings you have had in Russia you should feel the same."

Then Lepse hung his head. This dictator, a man whose word was law in high quarters, bowed his shaven pate. I wonder had the chance words of a stranger brought back visions of slaughter and blood. The ghosts of slain men and women do not seem pleasant when brought vividly to life during a quiet talk. Yet, as I have said, Lepse was sincere. My stay in Russia was to teach me that the majority of murders committed by the Reds were not sadistic killings, but unorganised slaughter deemed necessary for the successful conclusion of the revolution and the establishment of the Bolshevic minority in power.

A little later, when I had at his request sketched out some of my ideas for the development of the steel industry in Russia, Lepse said :

"Now, Mr. Westgarth, seeing you have come to Russia for a visit, try to look at our social conditions with the same broad outlook that you do our industries." I nodded and said I thought I understood

what he meant. "You," I suggested with a smile, "think that I should not expect to find a heaven on earth in Russia." This pleased him, and when I said that I never would adopt fanatical views whether I was in Russia for two weeks or twenty years he became most enthusiastic, and expressed the hope that I should be with them for the latter period.

"Any place you wish to go to is open to you," said Lepse, and then turned to Jerome and instructed him to see that our stay was a pleasant one. He also mentioned that should I wish to sign a contract he would personally see that the terms were the best possible. Lepse added that Jerome would be responsible as our interpreter in Russia during our tour. I later discovered that such orders, although given in all good faith by the leaders, often mean nothing. I am convinced that in Lepse I had a friend who could have done much to alter the ultimate conditions for me, had he but known of the difficulties with which I was faced. Unfortunately, he died the following January.

Our conversation had lasted about three hours, and when it began there were four persons in the room. This number swelled to twelve before we left, and they were a motley-looking bunch. Two or three of them accompanied us to the street and insisted on paying our fares in the tram-car. They were friendly souls, although hardly suited mentally for the important posts they undoubtedly held.

Nothing gives a clearer conception of Lepse's vast

power than the study of the organisation of which he was the head. Trade unionism is very important in Russia. Unless a worker is a member of a union he cannot hope to find employment and will lose the all-important ration card. Food in the Soviet Union is issued by the Government stores, and the rations allowed the people vary according to the nature of their work. A domestic or professional worker, for example, earns less than a manual worker, the latter being the Soviet's most prized creature. As head of this vast organisation, Lepse could stop all work in Russia at short notice. He did so once in Lenin's time, even going to the astonishing length of defying that all-powerful dictator. At the time Lepse reasoned that the industrialists were not receiving sufficient from the peasants in return for their own products, money being temporarily in disuse, as that was the period before the coming of the "New Economic Policy."

Lepse, furious at the position of iron- and steel-workers, who were not getting clothes or boots and were reduced to the verge of starvation, put his foot down. A general strike was declared and maintained till Lepse had his way.

Lepse's first assistant at the time of my visit was a man called Vaxoff, and as a matter of courtesy I was taken to his office. Victor Vaxoff was a wild and woolly Communist, who talked to me like a street-corner orator. He spoke good English, learned in America, where he had lived for some time, and his only subject was Communism of the

most scarlet order. When I asked him exactly what a Bolshevic was, his definition was interesting.

"A Bolshevic is a person who pushes out of the way anyone who attempts to block his ideas," he told me. "If anyone tries to hinder the process of Communism we 'bump them off.'" Later he described most vividly what he would do to certain of his enemies, and this seemed to cause our interpreter, Jerome, much concern.

When we left the office Jerome told me frankly that there was nothing in Vaxoff's cant. It was, he said, all right for schoolboys, but that was all. I later gathered that our interpreter was very annoyed with Vaxoff, who had made a gross blunder in upsetting the carefully laid plans to impress me with Soviet methods during my first few weeks.

On the way to the hotel Jerome told me a great deal about himself, and it did not impress me favourably. It appeared that he had been a pretty ardent revolutionary in Tsarist days, and repeatedly drew my attention to a hump on his back which he alleged was caused by troops in a pre-revolutionary riot. Later he was arrested and lay in prison in agony and without medical attention for many weeks. Friends secured his release, and eventually he went to America via Germany. After many hardships he was practically adopted by a kindly farmer, whose daughter he married. At the outbreak of the Russian Revolution he was wanted by the American police authorities in connection

with the I.W.W. movement and fled to Vladivostok, deserting his wife and son.

Arriving in Vladivostok penniless, Jerome begged a job from the then British Consul, who took pity on him and made him a kind of superior office-boy. His knowledge of languages gained him a more important post, but the Russian was devoid of gratitude and kept the Bolsheviks informed from the contents of the Consul's files. No doubt much of this knowledge was of great value to the Reds, who in return for his services made him deputy foreign Commissar after the fall of Vladivostok and the evacuation of the Allied forces.

His work in the Consul's office, coupled with one infamous story he told me about his activities in America, serve to show the type of man he was. It appears that the proprietor of an American hotel paid his employees less wages than they thought they should receive. Jerome was the hall-porter there and conceived the idea of bringing vermin in bottles and releasing them in the beds. Naturally, all the guests left, after which my interpreter went to the proprietor and suggested that if he wanted to keep his business he should raise the wages of the staff. The harassed man was only too glad to do so.

A surprise awaited us on our return to the hotel. The interpreter made it pretty clear that he was taking his dinner with us, but we were not prepared for the chorus of welcome which greeted us on our arrival at the suite. There must have been at least ten people there, all of whom spoke English, and

formed a sort of honorary reception committee. Jerome, in his oily way, indicated that I should ask them to dinner, saying that the Soviet would bear all expenses in that direction. I am a fairly easy-going person, and thinking that this might be a Russian custom, I invited them to join us at dinner.

It is nothing unusual for the types to take advantage of visitors in this way. Most of them only get a decent meal when they invite themselves out in circumstances like these, a fact that I was destined to learn very quickly in Russia. At the hotels usually filled with tourists and open to members of the Communist Party, ample food is available in the capital, but the food of the workers is rationed and they cannot buy it. They are compelled to exist in a hell of chronic hunger on the mere subsistence allowed them by their Communist masters. In fact food is as scarce in Russia as foreign currency, which is eagerly sought by the Soviet, as I propose to show later.

Next day I was asked to visit the head of the Siberian section, a man named Lubanov, who proved to be a refreshing change from most of the Soviet officials with whom I came in contact. Lubanov was a quiet, handsome, capable-looking man, and my first conversation with him convinced me that here was an administrator. He was very interested to meet me, and preferred to listen to others. In this respect he was unique amongst the Communists whom I met in Russia, for one and all they thought any knowledge I might possess must necessarily

become subservient to their views on the Communist future of the world.

Lubanov mentioned during the course of conversation that he was determined to leave his position and commence school-teaching again. At the time I did not realise the full significance of the statement.

He arranged for me to proceed to Leningrad that evening and also spoke directly on the phone to the President of the State Planning Institute for U.S.S.R. in that city, giving instructions for a man named Bardin to meet my son and me on our arrival in Leningrad. The Wagons Lits which took us from the Red capital was swift and comfortable, and after an all-night journey we arrived at the October Railway Terminus, only to find that neither Bardin nor anyone else from the State Planning Institute was there to meet us. Fortunately Jerome had told us in such circumstances to go direct to the Hotel Europa, where the manager, a charming Russian of the old type, made us welcome. He promptly escorted us to the best suite in the hotel, impressing on us the fact that this was in accordance with Government instructions.

We had just taken stock of our new surroundings when to my surprise the door burst open and a big man, six feet or more in height, broad, and with enormous feet entered. Opening a big mouth to display gold teeth, and wagging a huge head, he demanded to know if I was Mr. Westgarth. Naturally perturbed at his mode of entry, I did not reply,



С. С. Р. — В. С. Н. Х.

ГОСУД. ИНСТИТУТ ПО ПРОЕКТИРОВАНИЮ
МЕТАЛЛИЧЕСКИХ ЗАВОДОВ
"ГИПРОМЕЗ"
ЛЕНИНГРАД

Удостоверение

Предъявитель сего *инженер. специалист*

Продлен по 193 .. г.

Зав. АФУ

Продлен по 193 .. г.

Зав. АФУ

Институт Г. С.

является сотрудником Гипромеза.

Действительно по *1-IV* 193 .. г.

Зав. АФУ

Инж. Александр 193 .. г.



which rather nonplussed him. He stared stupidly for some seconds. After studying him carefully, I calmly inquired who the devil he was, and whether it was the custom to burst into a hotel guest's room without the usual courtesy of knocking. He seemed rather upset at this, but excused himself on the grounds that as he had been late at the October Terminus, he was naturally anxious to assure himself that we had reached the hotel safely. This man was, of course, Bardin, and certain things I later heard regarding the fate of interpreters who failed to take proper care of the guests of the Soviet made me excuse his presumption at the Europa.

That afternoon I was taken straight to the State Planning Institute, where I was introduced to Bourov, the President. He proved to be a shrewd, observant type of man but hardly intellectual. In a few words he told me of Lubanov's conversation over the telephone from Moscow, and said that I should take things easily in Leningrad. All the necessary arrangements would be made for me, and he hoped that I would visit all the theatres and places of interest. As though to make it appear that life in the U.S.S.R. was not a continual round of pleasure, he asked me to look over the schedules for a new steel-works in Siberia, of which he hoped I would become the consulting engineer. These schedules arrived at my hotel later in the evening and as a result of studying them I made up my mind to return to Moscow and to join the Soviet's service.

We spent ten days in Leningrad, and the theatres and other places of interest we visited have been too well described by better pens than mine for me to deal with them here. However, I ought to say that we found the theatres magnificent and they were always crowded. One thing cannot be doubted and that is that the New Russia encourages its people to cultivate art. The stalls and dress circle contained a good percentage of workers, and they appeared to possess an appreciation of the theatre which seems all too rare in other cities.

At the end of our tour I reported to Bourov that I should be pleased to return to Russia, whereupon he asked me to look round in England and find other engineers who would be willing to work for the Soviet. This I promised to do, and Bourov, in return, promised to pay me substantially for any such work accomplished.

CHAPTER IV

BRITISH INDUSTRY AND RUSSIA

BEFORE leaving Russia a contract was arranged with the Soviet Government similar to that which I had carried out in India.

When the essential preliminaries had been completed I decided to visit the State Bank and arrange for a cable draft to be dispatched to London. After some difficulties in finding our way we reached the bank building, where a huge queue of people was waiting. In structure alone this bank resembled similar institutions in capitalist countries; nothing about the weary customers could compare with the business-like appearance of similar visitors to normal banks.

Ignoring the queue I went straight into the bank and walking up to the counter spent fifteen minutes in making my simple request to the bald-faced teller. He produced an interpreter of sorts, who assured me it was a very serious and complicated affair to get Russian funds transferred abroad. I was still trying to tell him that money must go abroad immediately when a portly old German, obviously a merchant of some kind, patted me on the shoulder, "Don't worry, my boy," he said in quite good

English, "you will get used to Russia when you have been here a few years." He explained to me that it was necessary to get permission from the State Finance Committee before money could be forwarded to London. We hustled round that day and the necessary permission was procured. I learned later that it took ten days for the cable to reach London, which is hardly an advertisement for state control of banking.

Defenders of the Soviet will claim that such incidents are inseparable from the birth of a new system, but that is poor consolation to working people who earn money, only to find that it is of no use to them outside the country in which it is printed.

One of the visitors to my hotel in Moscow had been one Jackson, an English Communist, who had made a temporary home in Russia. He was a belligerent type, and the first question he asked me was for what crime I had left England. When I replied that my character was perfectly good, and that I had not changed my name as he obviously suspected, he appeared very surprised, and frankly admitted that he thought the majority of foreigners in Russia found it advisable to leave their country for their country's good.

He explained his position to me quite frankly, and requested my permission to have his wife travel with us to London with my son and I. At the time I found it difficult to refuse, although I confess I was not at all anxious for the job. I had almost forgotten about the matter in the rush of

packing, and I was reminded of her existence by an angry telephone call from her husband just as my interpreter arrived at the hotel with the railway tickets for my son and myself.

"I thought you were going to keep your promise as one Englishman to another," this Communist informed me, with a blissful disregard of his own Communistic beliefs. "What about my wife?"

I assured him that we were quite willing for her to travel with us but naturally expected him to arrange for her transportation. At the same time, although I did not mention it, I thought it strange that Jackson should so quickly be informed of our departure, when we had only known ourselves a few minutes previously on what train we would be travelling.

The lady, poor soul, seemed helpless throughout the journey. She travelled on a second-class ticket and seemed obsessed on arrival in London with the importance of some message she had to deliver verbally at the Communist headquarters in King Street. As we arrived late on the evening of Good Friday it seemed difficult to assist her very much in the fulfilment of her mission. We booked her a room at a Southampton Row hotel and left her there with our blessing.

In the train between Moscow and Berlin we met the representative of a large American engineering company who was travelling overland from Vladivostok. His conversation, in the light of what I later learned regarding Russian methods, was

interesting. He was very keen on learning whom I had met in Moscow and Leningrad and when I told him he asked me what were the prospects of business for his company, of whose branches in China he was the head. I replied that there seemed to be ample room for business in Russia, whereupon he turned to me and asked knowingly :

“ Yes, but who is the man to oil there ? ”

He said it so naturally that for a moment I was nonplussed and finally replied that my stay had been too short for me to decide whether or no any particular official would be able to accept graft, and, what was more important, whether he would be able to render useful service in return. I did suggest, however, that it would hardly be in accord with professed Communism to do so and hinted that from what I had seen the secret services of Russia seemed very efficient.

I had another experience of Russian officialdom during my first few days in London. On leaving Moscow I had been issued with tickets for my journey, £60 for incidental expenses and a letter of credit for a further £100 on the Arcos Agency. When I went to cash this letter I was the target of many officious and useless questions. When I pointed out that the letter of credit was payable on demand they merely replied that everything was to be referred to Moscow. After a month of parleying I eventually threatened to write to Moscow direct, after which things were much easier for me and the money was paid almost immediately.

As soon as possible I tried to redeem my promise to Bourov and also visited a number of British firms to suggest that they should do business with Russia. Speaking generally I am sorry to say that I was greeted with an apathy which, if continued, bodes ill for the future of British trade anywhere.

The directors of several engineering firms were so interested that they called a meeting, at which I outlined my experiences in the Soviet Union and suggested how they should proceed in order to establish themselves in Russia. One director replied that he was willing to do business with Russia but would conduct it through Brussels, whilst another old gentleman present boomed out the sentiment that Russians were all thieves and murderers and that he personally would not do business with them. In this somewhat unbusiness-like atmosphere I replied that Americans seemed to have no such scruples, and that their houses were even then well established in Russia. Most of the younger members seemed most enthusiastic at this little speech, but that availed me little. The meeting finished with the oldest member waxing hot about British interests and cursing all Russians whether Bolshevik or otherwise.

One famous firm seemed quite anxious at first to supply British coke ovens. Naturally, as I was to have a large say in the construction of the works, one would have thought that my advice would have commanded instant attention. As it was, however, they haggled and procrastinated in Germany, Bel-

gium and elsewhere instead of dealing with the Soviet direct. The result was that American coke ovens to the value of a quarter of a million pounds were ordered and paid for by the Russian Government.

The business manager of another well-known British company told me that he did not want to have anything to do with Russia, and added that there was no business doing there, anyway. "Isn't there?" I replied, and gave him details of a Siberian scheme. He was immediately interested, and when he was told that there were very many more of similar works going forward in Russia he became extremely enthusiastic. We were invited to look round one of their factories near London, and here I was introduced to many of his colleagues whilst at luncheon in the works offices. Afterwards in the works manager's office, with an excellent cigar, we discussed the prospects again. They all seemed very enthusiastic and our host boomed forth, "Pull off anything like that for us and we will put you and your family in an Aladdin's Cave." Anxious as I was, however, to enter the "Cave," his firm showed no tangible signs of helping to get me there, and even when eventually orders were placed showed no further indication that they had any intention of transplanting myself and family into the hiding-place of this legendary treasure.

The attitude of one well-known British engineer is an interesting example of our business methods. I received numerous letters from this gentleman during our stay in U.S.S.R. and he seemed particu-

larly anxious to procure very high-salaried posts with the Russian Government for numbers of his colleagues, but when he was himself invited to come to Moscow he declined, saying he was too busy, although in all his letters he had complained bitterly of the state of business in Great Britain, concluding by saying that if there was any business with the Soviet in which I could co-operate with him and from which he could procure large commissions he would be only too pleased to do what he could in the matter—in London. In contrast to American methods this attitude is appalling. They do not wait to be invited but arrive on the spot, and as one American said to me in Moscow, “I don’t care if I stay here six months, I am going to get the order,” and he did.

A further insight into American business methods is provided by the manner in which they persuaded a commission of Russian engineers and officials to go direct to America and not to consider British products. I had advised British firms of the creation of the Commission and told them to keep in touch with the Arcos directors, which they did, and promptly sent me a letter telling me that the conference table was laid, and a cablegram also, and awaited the arrival of the Russian Commission from the U.S.S.R. Meanwhile American interests on the spot in Moscow had taken the Commission direct to New York, much to the amazement of Arcos, the firms concerned and myself.

One British firm was prepared to allow the Russian

Government pretty extensive credit facilities and on the firm's behalf I returned to Russia with specifications for several thousands of pounds' worth of their latest type boilers. This did not suit certain officials who preferred to deal with America, and I later learned that all my direct communications from Russia to the representative of the English company concerned were stopped in the post, and on one occasion I found them photographed by the Russians.

Naturally my visits to various companies occupied a great deal of attention, and intimations from Russia told me that the authorities were impatient for my return. I learned the director of the Siberian steel works had been removed and another had taken his place. One of the first actions of the new director was to cable me to return to Moscow early. I replied that I was engaged on business for the Soviet and would return when it was completed. Next day I received word from Jerome that my presence was required out there and I decided to leave immediately. My last request in London was to the manager of one of the companies I had met, whom I asked to be kind enough to gather applications from reputable sources for the engineering positions vacant in Russia.

CHAPTER V

A RUSSIAN STEEL WORKS

AT last we were on our way. Through the windows of the Wagons Lits we saw the green and fragrant countryside, a veritable fairyland of freshness, now that the snows of winter had melted before the thawing warmth of the Russian spring.

The first stages of that journey remain the most wonderful memory of my long stay in Russia.

The Trans-Siberian Express starts on its journey late at night. When we awoke the next morning we were flying through dense forests. The grade was already rising, and the train slowing with the increased effort. We were approaching the Urals.

We had already passed some interesting places during the night—Kotelnitch, Viatka, where one can procure on the station platform all manner of interesting peasant handicraft, carved from the famous Karelian birch.

A few hours afterwards we came to Perm, the real beginning of the actual Siberian road, a large junction of rail and waterways.

Then onward, slower and slower, the thick forests pass away and we are moving over the wild rocky areas. The Ural Reaches, a short stop at Kunga,

and once more we are flying over the rocky plain towards Sverdlovsk (Ekaterinburg), another large junction where the tourist buys semi-precious stones taken from the rich Ural mountains, and polished in the city. The prices are exorbitant for such baubles but there is a roaring trade done in them and much profit is made for the Soviet.

Now we begin a headlong rush down the eastern slopes of the Ural—on towards the gigantic plainlands of Siberia. Next morning found our train treading its way over the plains already green with the coming harvest; Nature's fresh colours melting softly into the distance in a hazy mist glowing in the sunshine of a glorious June day, rarely broken by the advent of a few lonely houses huddled together under the shadow of the ever-present church. Thus four days and three nights flew by—an interesting and picturesque journey. On the fourth evening we arrived at the junction of where we left the Trans-Siberian and changed to the local line for Tomsk.

And what a change it was!

Drawn up on the opposite platform were four coaches of a kind that would have disgraced the lowest class of the worst continental railroad. There were no class divisions—we were all to travel fourth, or fortieth—it was quite as bad as that. The seats were hard, and served merely as a lurking place for vermin of all kinds. At first we were shown into a carriage where a dozen or so dirty creatures were herded. It was explained that the best that could

be managed was to secure our party a carriage to ourselves. The train was the only one for 24 hours, and in any case the carriages were all the same. There was nothing else for it but to pile ourselves and our luggage into the confines of the carriage and continue our journey.

I might point out here that the Wagons Lits in which we travelled were survivors of the old régime, and that Russia has not produced any new rolling stock of that type since the Revolution. Most of the trains were at one time fairly comfortable, whilst many were first class in every sense of the term. Unfortunately the trains were so misused during the revolutionary period and the ensuing years that they are now little better than horse boxes. The few carriages that managed to survive the mob are utilised for tourist traffic and for distinguished foreign visitors. The others I have already described, and they are all about the same.

At last we drew into the station at Tomsk, and there a most unpleasant surprise awaited us. The official who received us politely informed us that no house was ready, and that we would be accommodated at the local hotel overnight. Had there been a train available I should have turned back to Moscow, and nothing would have induced me to return. However, there was not, and I had my first experience of a Siberian hotel. I devoutly hope that Providence will save me from a similar experience.

The hotel was little more than a crumbling shack, from which all decent furniture had been expropriated. Its walls had once been whitewashed, and in better days had known wallpaper. Our rooms were untidy, and the only water in the room was in a very dirty carafe above the washstand. The next morning, after washing as best we could under the circumstances, I inquired about breakfast. The interpreter, several others and the manager were sent for in turn and each shook his head as my request was made.

The interpreter entered and informed me that I could, if I wished, see the house which the Town Soviet had arranged to have prepared for me. He explained that the Soviet is similar to a town council in England, but with much wider powers, and amongst other things is charged with the accommodation of all workers in its district. Of course, he explained, they had received special orders with regard to myself, and had taken over one of the best houses in the town. I would have my study, as Lukatskoff had insisted, and, yes, we had a bathroom, too. All this sounded reasonable enough, and we left the hotel to view our new residence.

Many curious eyes watched us as we passed through the streets, for it must be remembered we were the first British family to arrive in Tomsk since the Soviets assumed control, and news flies quickly in Russia. But once more I noticed the hungry looks of the townspeople, their general apathy, their appearance of utter hopelessness. It

was not a pleasant sight, but one which was to become familiar to me in every district I visited in Russia.

Our house looked outwardly attractive. It was not particularly well repaired, but it was well-built, and I thought that the interior would be satisfactory. We climbed the stone steps and marched into the hallway, where an amazing spectacle met our gaze. The hallway was packed with workmen with buckets, brushes, brooms and paper knives. Some were scraping off the wallpaper while others were slapping paste on to the walls in readiness for fresh coverings. Other people hurried through the hall from room to room, whilst others crept about the floors chipping and painting the surface. The whole scene was one of utter confusion heightened by the fact that everyone seemed to get in everyone else's way.

A glance around assured me that things might be reasonable enough when the redecorating was complete. The house consisted of six rooms, a bathroom and a kitchen. Naturally, after what I had been told, I imagined that the house was for our exclusive use. My surprise was great when the interpreter blandly informed me that only the bathroom and three other rooms were reserved for us; fourteen other people would occupy the remaining rooms and have access to our bathroom.

"Whatever do you mean by this?" I asked the representative of the Town Soviet, who had accompanied us to the house. "How on earth do you

expect us all to get a bath in the morning if fourteen of us have to line up before we go to work ? ” The interpreter seemed greatly amused, but until my words had been translated the Soviet representative was very worried. Then he too joined in the merriment, and it was explained to me that the residents would in all probability only bathe once a month. Naturally this impressed me even less favourably than the prospect of waiting for my morning tub. However, a couple of months later we were removed to a very much larger house—in this case far too big for our needs—which we had to ourselves.

In this connection an amusing incident occurred after taking possession of our new home. The “ powers that be ” decreed that one of the rooms of our apartments should be newly papered, and a messenger was dispatched with all haste to Moscow, roughly 2,000 miles there and 2,000 miles back, to buy 22 rolls of wallpaper. Fourteen days later he arrived in Tomsk with only 20 rolls of wallpaper—my wife and a friend in the meantime had bought quite good paper in Tomsk and the place was papered out by the time of his return. This is typical of Soviet economy.

After the initial inspection of our new quarters, I was asked to visit the headquarters offices of the organisation which was to complete the Kuzneitsk works, the site of which was something like six hundred miles away. These, we were informed, were only the temporary offices, and after what I had seen of our residence I expected to find some-

thing very ordinary indeed. My surprise may be imagined when I was shown into a huge building furnished with everything of the most modern kind. The offices of each official were fitted with huge mahogany desks, imposingly littered with papers. Telephones were everywhere, while huge leather arm-chairs and rather expensive carpets made the rooms look like the sanctum of some financial magnate. There was a great deal of talk going on but apparently nobody appeared to be doing very much. My questions as to the progress of the work were treated as somewhat impertinent. By this time I realised that whatever the status of a foreign expert, he must never presume to question a good Communist. Russians must rule Russia, and technicians occupy a similar position to that of a minister to a tyrant.

We managed to buy some furniture and household things for ourselves and two or three days later we occupied the rooms. The following day I went to the office and the directorate asked me if I would go to the site of the works and new town at the earliest possible moment as they wished for my views of the whole undertaking. In a couple of days our rooms were put fairly into shape and although not in harmony with the place ourselves, I decided to take the trip.

A Russian engineer and my interpreter were to accompany me to the site and on the evening mentioned at about four o'clock we started by train from Tomsk across country. We travelled by single

line for that night and next day, arriving at the town of Kuzneitsk about six-thirty in the evening. No one was there to meet the train. We sent our interpreter to locate someone who would be useful, and after a wait of three hours there came to the station a beautiful new American motor-car.

My first job was to inspect the workers' quarters, and when I broached the subject I noticed a look of despair pass between the field engineer and the representative of the local Soviet. They appeared to me decent fellows, and this impression was confirmed when they told me quite frankly that the conditions of the workers were far below what they should have been. However, he hoped that I would make recommendations for necessary changes, and would be only too pleased to show me everything. We started off.

The first house I visited was little better than a two-storyed hut. It contained seven rooms, and a small kitchen which had to cater for the eighteen occupants of the place. Two drab colourless women were in the kitchen, but I saw little signs of food. It seemed that little attempt had been made to keep the place clean, and a glance at the bedding of the occupants showed much need of a washing day for bed-clothes. I casually mentioned this to those accompanying me. They simply shrugged their shoulders in typical Russian fashion.

Small wonder, indeed, that mortality amongst the undernourished workers and their families was so high. The further I went the worse things seemed to

become. Batches of workers were living in caves in the nearby hillsides, others in huts covered with turf. The sanitary conditions were quite indescribable. A penal settlement could never approach this, I thought. . . .

I should here mention that the "houses" I visited were all occupied by proletarians, that is to say, the new aristocracy of Russia—in theory. Proletarian status is highly prized in Russia, for without it one is doomed to virtual starvation. I confess that it is much easier for an ex-Tsarist official to scale the heights of British society, than to enter the narrow gateway of the proletariat in Russia. In the beginning was Lenin, and Lenin decreed that none should share the bounties of the New Russia who had enjoyed the fruits of the workers' toil in the days when the Tsars were firm on their throne. For this purpose he created proletarian status.

Briefly one must prove to the satisfaction of the local commissar that his parents and grandparents were workers within the meaning of the decree. Any individual not engaged in manual labour, or in minor degrees of office work, any person holding a commissioned or non-commissioned rank in the Tsarist forces, former government officials (no matter how low), policemen and technicians of every kind were declared non-proletarian, and disallowed the benefits accruing from that status. I have nothing to do with politics but I would tell all intending Communists this :

Realise that with the coming of revolution, existing society will be overthrown, but do not delude yourselves that you will automatically find yourselves in a position above that of your former controllers. One very small section, or I should say clique, will gain control, and will keep it with the aid of the same forces which maintain the rich in their position to-day. You will find those semi-educated Hyde Park orators set in high places, but you who set them there will not share their greatness. At the present time you have some chance of obtaining a living in the world. You may secure comfort and money if you work and struggle for it. Under Communism you will have none of those chances, for the people who have exalted themselves will keep you under, just as they are keeping the people of Russia under to-day.

If you are fortunate you will live in conditions similar to those of the proletarians in the Kuz-neitsk district, but may heaven preserve you from the life of the non-proletarian. Some of the workers were lodged in large houses, and some in small, but everywhere there was the same awful crowded conditions approximating to the lowest slums in any part of the world. In fact, I am not exaggerating when I claim that I have seen Chinese coolies living in better conditions than those Russian workmen, who, if employed in any other country, would be living in modest comfort.

“Well, Mr. Westgarth, what do you think of it

all?" inquired the harassed field engineer when we had concluded our nauseating tour.

"I think that the conditions of the worker are a disgrace to the Soviet," I replied frankly, "and we must do all we can to get them altered." That evening I made practical suggestions which would have given the workers, within eight or nine weeks, 30,000 gallons of fresh clean water per day, electric light in at least 100 houses at a very reasonable cost. These only I mention as outstanding among others. I could not, of course, give them advice as to how they could get bread, etc., but I kept my promise to Lepse in Moscow—"that I would let him know how I found social conditions wherever I travelled in Russia."

"But will they listen to you?" questioned the Communist secretary and the field engineer.

An even greater surprise was in store for me, one that would have made me laugh but for the element of stark tragedy. The engineer told me that the plans were under way for the creation of a new model township for the workers, and asked me to report on it. I almost collapsed when he took me to the river and pointed out with some pride that the river was being diverted in order that the town might be built in the mud of its bed. "Which would," he said, "be dried for the purpose," by some miraculous means unspecified.

This amazing project was well under way when I arrived, and an army of workmen was engaged on the colossal task of diverting the swift-flowing river.

RUSSIAN ENGINEER

Imagine my surprise on visiting the place about three months later to find the field engineer gone and also the Communist; the well-paid staff and directors, with electric light and telephones, with good meals provided and served to them—but the workers in pretty much the same conditions looking forward to a hard Siberian winter.

CHAPTER VI

THREE INTERESTING TYPES

SITTING in our suite of rooms in the Moscow hotel, I noticed a peculiar looking young man sitting behind the crowd who had, as usual, come to spend the evening there.

Ungainly and careless in dress, he suggested a tramp, his facial expression and appearance, coupled with the cast in one of his eyes and his jet black hair parted in the centre of his head, forcibly reminded me of a certain monk, Rasputin. He was listening intently and his tragic appearance intrigued me.

I crossed the room and sat beside him. "What is your name?" I asked him.

"Belinkiss," came the ready reply in English.

"Have you travelled much?" I ventured.

"Yeah, sure. Look," pointing to a mark on his forehead. "I got that from the Police in the United States of America when I was a member of the I.W.W. (International Workers of the World)."

He soon opened up and his bloodthirsty stories began to rival those of his friend Jerome in lurid detail. I listened attentively, for this was during my first few weeks in Russia. I was only on a tour of

inspection and on my return I would need an interpreter.

It transpired that the officials had waiting for me a young lady of the old régime as my interpreter on my return, but I was told that it was always safer to have someone politically sound and of the worker stock. I thought this young man was just the companion to be useful as my interpreter.

Well, here was the man, dressed in a patched leather jacket, physically strong, rough and ready, a typical Bolshevic, I thought. Yes, this must be my first interpreter for my rough tours in the heart of Siberia. I would have the worker type or none.

Leningrad was his first real trial. He succeeded and swept all before him and was exceptionally attentive. The importance of high standing officials whom he met with me and their elaborate offices had impressed him. He felt he had the chance of his life. So on we went to Siberia.

He was very sensitive in many ways apart from his rough exterior, and after our first tour of the Kuzneitsk district we were returning to Tomsk. During the early hours of the morning I could not sleep and there was running through my mind thoughts of home, and I was trying to compare what I had seen on my tour with conditions in Britain. With the swing of the train and the uncomfortable conditions, there came to my mind the lines of a hymn and for some time I sang it as I thought to myself as follows :

THREE INTERESTING TYPES

“ For peaceful homes and healthful days
For all the blessings earth displays
We owe thee thankfulness and praise
Giver of all.”

I had not reckoned on the fact that my interpreter was a member of the O.G.P.U. . . . he was awake listening. “ Please Mr. Westgarth will you teach me that tune and the words ; there is something about it I like.” And so I obliged him and many times during the months following this O.G.P.U. man sang those words to me ; many times they came in very aptly. From that angle of his nature Belinkiss was very often helpful.

But there was another side to his nature, for every place we visited this “ worker Rasputin ” had two or three strings to his bow . . . how he loved the ladies . . . how they vamped him . . . and how he liked to steal from our temporary apartment, secretly, in the small hours of the morning. Very strange, for he was not good looking in any way, but perhaps it was his strange eyes.

During one of our trips I was suddenly awakened by the sound of someone talking in the room. Looking up I saw Comrade Belinkiss standing stripped in front of the window, arms outstretched, talking to the rising sun.

I had begun to think he was crazy sometimes, now I knew it for a fact. He left me a few months later to go back to his single room in Moscow, there to sit and smoke, a favourite pastime of his.

Just before we left Tomsk for Moscow my secretary received a telephone call, the stranger asking if he could see Mr. Westgarth as he was an Englishman. I told her to invite him to our apartment that evening. Reaching home just after dark I was greeted by a person of Jewish appearance who claimed to have come from London. We found him very pleasant and extremely talkative. His story rang true enough and many were the miseries he had to tell us of during his travels in Siberia. By this time he had become a member of the Town Soviet of Tomsk.

The main feature of his visits to our apartment on later dates was his great desire to eat. Further he wished to become a teacher in the University of Tomsk and asked for assistance in his studies. But the most abnormal request made was when he had signed up a contract with a Moscow Trust to write a book on the manufacture of steel . . . and he wished me to write it for him.

Finally he desired to have his British passport renewed and I made time to go to the British Consul in Leningrad to help him in that direction. Quite a long stretch from the East End of London to the icy wastes of Siberia with little else than a vivid imagination and a desire for adventure . . . particularly along the lines of Communism !

I am always thankful to that Jew for one thing and that was his kindness in bringing to our house one of the sweetest characters it was our lot to meet in Soviet Russia.

THREE INTERESTING TYPES

Taking off my heavy overcoat and furs I entered the sitting-room thinking to have a quiet evening by the fire, leaving the outside world so bleak and cold for at least a few hours.

It had not to be, for at that moment the telephone bell rang in my study and a request was made by this Jewish friend asking if he could bring one of his acquaintances to see us.

Being somewhat of a sociable being my reply was, "Surely ; bring him over now and later we will take dinner together." Some thirty minutes later the two visitors arrived and our new friend was introduced. He could speak many languages and was a man of culture and a responsible official of the Tomsk University.

Settling down until dinner was ready, he asked for some music on the gramophone. Not looking at the name of the record I started the music. It proved to be a very old hymn. The effect was instantaneous. He became exceptionally nervous . . . no conversation developed as I had anticipated . . . the tears began to flow . . . he was having a fight with his emotions . . . he took refuge in another room.

When the storm had subsided he returned and asked to be excused, then he said quietly to me, "I thought that world was all dead . . . you have opened up a new world to me again ; they have tried to kill it but I have told them they never could." I wondered where he was driving in his talk . . . but I had not long to wait.

On important occasions in committee at the University he had tried several times to raise the standard of thought somewhat higher than pure materialism. He was not religious by any means he told me, but, said he, "I believe in soul and mind, and by even suggesting these things he was told they would hold him as a counter-revolutionary if he persisted. My body you may kill, he told them, but never my mind or my soul." These are his very words to me.

Pointing through the window he told me that he had seen thousands of corpses piled up in the square, just as one sees the carcasses of animals, frozen and bloodstained. Can you wonder then at my feelings to-night when your music gave sweetness to "Jesu Lover of my Soul?" That is the first hymn I have heard for years . . . nothing but intrigue. Plans and work and comparative poverty!

Coming to Leningrad a few days before the outbreak of the Great War to marry his wife, a Russian by birth, owing to various circumstances he had never been able to return to his beloved Switzerland . . . he had stayed with wife and children through the horrors of war and revolution and some awful stories he had to tell.

We talked far into the morning hours and as he left us to go to his home I slipped into his hand a small book, *Ether and Reality*, by Sir O. Lodge. He told me later he devoured it before sleeping, the only real comfort, coupled with the hymn, he had felt for some long time . . . had we any more such

THREE INTERESTING TYPES

to pass on. He expressed the sentiment that he was my spiritual brother . . . we met only as people passing one another on two different ships, going separate ways on the ocean . . . we saw him . . . gave to him . . . and passed on. The kinship was there and remains to this day.

Can the Soviet system kill this very substantial life force? Whatever stands in the way of their dogmatism they either try to crush or kill, but I noticed whilst in Russia that even in death they still symbolise by having the Cross painted *red* over many graves. What means all this strange paradox? Surely these things have nothing to do with capitalism—ignorance, superstition, etc.—as many would have us believe!

CHAPTER VII

AMONGST THE HIGH PRIESTS OF COMMUNISM

N.K.R.K.I.! What tremors these five letters cause in Russia to-day, an Industrial Scotland Yard! The first example the Soviet Union has set the world . . . a new departure ; watching the Industries of the Union, with its spies in every part of the country, working hand in glove with the O.G.P.U.

The sabotaging official who finds himself the subject of inquiry from the N.K.R.K.I. is summarily dismissed, and as he steps from his post the O.G.P.U. is waiting to finish the job. . . . Woe betide the evil-doer.

Working at the Central Offices for some months I saw and realised the terrific efforts the Bolshevics in power are making to push forward their industries with the almost chaotic material at their disposal among men of their own country.

Even in this institution they have to import foreign aid, Germans, Poles, Lithuanians, Swedes, Armenians, a member of the American Bankers' Club of New York, and the lowly Englishman.

The huge building hums with activity at all hours . . . couriers pass through its portals hur-

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Народный Комиссариат
РАБОЧЕ-КРЕСТЬЯНСКОЙ ИНСПЕКЦИИ СССР
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24 апреля

30
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УДОСТОВЕРЕНИЕ № 64

Предъявитель сего тов. ВЕСТГАРТ Дж.Р. *Лен*

Консультант

ВКП (б) — НКРКИ СССР командирован в на завод

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The Author's N.K.R.K.I. identity card

AMONGST THE HIGH PRIESTS OF COMMUNISM

riedly, its officials know no fixed hours of work. Their high-powered motor-cars stand waiting to be summoned at a moment's notice, all kind and class of people come and go on all types of business.

During my time there the Chancellor of the institution was a one-time ambassador to Great Britain. This post, being of a very important character in Russia, he was closeted behind padded doors and was almost unapproachable. He was nicknamed Peter the Zealot . . . others I have heard call him Peter Petroff and others have called him Rozengoltz.

The chief commissar of the institution at that time was one Ordjonikidze, kept as a man apart, a mysterious person one could rarely see.

Jacob Peters, the notorious, also had his office in this institution on the same floor as my own and that of my friend, Mr. Hannah of America. There are many names which would have no significance to the rest of the world housed in that building, but those same names strike terror to the hearts of the average Russian, and not without reason.

Some of the names already mentioned are members of the famous or infamous "Cheka," which forms the collegium of the O.G.P.U., that is, they are the virtual masters of the whole of Russia.

Members of the dreaded "Cheka" spy on the spies, watch one another and unknowingly are watched themselves the meanwhile. Five-year industrial plans are mingled with five-year political plots. Strange furtive employees suddenly appear

and, after a short while, as mysteriously disappear, whence they come and whither they go no uninitiated ever know.

Every industry in the Soviet Union has its own (C.I.D.) criminal investigation department. Here lists of suspects are kept, periodical reports arriving of their movements. The organisation is huge, its ramifications second only to the noted O.G.P.U., expense is of no account, yet withal, the industries of U.S.S.R. make but small progress.

This institution has the power to issue orders to the Supreme Economic Council and does so backed by the O.G.P.U. Every Russian knows its power and has felt its influence at some time or other during the Soviet régime; to merely have its eye upon you with suspicion is sufficient evidence that you are to pass from active participation among the ranks of the Soviet Industrial workers.

Many clever men have been sent to Siberia or other such out-of-the-way places through this organisation, to do a prodigious amount of work under the worst possible conditions for a mere pittance of a wage . . . just enough to keep body and soul together . . . but not too close together . . . the usual charge being one of industrial sabotage.

If you still grumble whilst in these out-of-the-way places they may give you a holiday in the Arctic regions, or perhaps you may be "commandeered" to hack down trees for no wages at all. If this treatment does not alter your outlook towards the Soviet

then you will be "liquidated" without further fuss, or alternately, die in prison, from ptomaine poisoning, old age or senile decay . . . it does not benefit a Russian to disagree with the Bosses of Marxism.

I was permitted to have a talk with the Chancellor, whom I found to be an interesting personality. He has since been transferred to another post, that of Commissar for Foreign Trade. When I first met him it was a somewhat difficult task for the ordinary person. However, I was taken to him by the head of the Foreign Specialists Section of that institution, hence I was made welcome.

His room was large and quiet, the doors heavily padded, the walls green and restful, the usual desk stood in the corner and a battery of telephones upon it . . . bundles of papers littered the surface . . . as you walked your feet sank into a soft pile carpet . . . the door closes behind you and you are shut off completely from the tumultuous world outside . . . silence. He greeted me with a smile, brought a chair with his own hands . . . this is Rozengoltz. Dark hair, thick dark eyebrows, dark eyes, dark clothes, not very tall but broad and powerful, strong and well-kept hands with slow and deliberate movements, complete master of himself, it would appear, no kind of emotion shows on his face, for a few fleeting moments there is a flickering smile lightening up the dark brooding features when he first meets one. He is very guarded in his speech and, as do nearly all officials, says he cannot speak

English very well, but I notice he takes great interest in what I have to say to my son during the interview. Well, his answers to me prove that he certainly understands English.

We talk of business and a contract, and soon the interview is over. He has enjoyed having my son and I to see him, that much we can tell, for he now smiles broadly and extending his hand clasps mine in a warm grasp. His parting words to me were : " Come again and see me Mr. Westgarth, and if you cannot, well, old friends have a way of meeting again. . . . Good-bye " and we left him to plunge his way through the intrigues in which all officials are involved in the New Russia.

CHAPTER VIII

EXILES IN THE NEW SIBERIA

LIKE many who will read these pages, there was a time when one arose furious after reading some Russian novel, incensed at the cruelty of a monarchy which could send men, women and children into the ice-bound wastes of Siberia, there to perish from the combination of the harshness and the inhumanity of man.

In those days, men and women worked in the awful mines with irons about their limbs and the lash of the armed guards urging them to frenzied efforts in the cause of their oppressors. Common humanity is against such an evil system as appertained in those days, by which our fellow-beings, for no greater crime than that they failed to agree with those in authority, could be condemned to a living grave. I believe that most of us were glad that the Revolution overthrew that monstrous system ; and that all of us were sincere in the hope that the lot of the oppressed classes of Russia would be lightened with the coming of the new régime.

I care not what form that régime took. After all it was not so much a matter, whether autocracy or democracy took the reins, so long as the hands

which guided the destinies of the nation were careful ones and the people were led along a road which brings them the maximum of creature comfort and makes for the happiness of all.

There is an old adage, "That distant pastures look green," and to the people of Russia the distant vista of Communism looked indeed a paradise. But the greater the distance "the greater the greenness" if I may coin a phrase, and to many ardent revolutionary families in distant corners of the world, Communist Russia is a beacon of freedom, hope and love.

If there is one thing I like about the non-Russian Communist and sympathisers with the Soviet Union—apart from those who make a handsome living from the profession of their beliefs—it is their sincerity. Since my return from modern Russia, I have often faced in talk, ardent men and women who know only what they prefer to believe about Russia. Such people are always anxious to meet me, but they come prepared, not for a factual conversation, but in the hope of hearing me express views, based on experience, which will coincide with their views. As a rule they depart in a huff, firmly convinced that I am a confirmed bourgeois anxious only to put a spoke in the wheel of a "Great Experiment" for the ultimate benefit of mankind.

With the coming of Bolshevism it was announced that the nation must become entirely independent of the hated Capitalist, and that all forms of individual effort must be ruthlessly suppressed—unless, of

course, such effort was for the good of the State. The latter part of that law was a difficult one to define, and in most cases went without definition at all. For example, a man might make a great success of running a particular trust or State department. This would immediately lead to jealousy in high places, and merely for the crime of doing his job the unfortunate man would find himself either removed or facing the dreaded charge of counter-revolution.

In short a premium was placed upon inefficiency and woe betide the man who allowed his natural desire for success, even though it benefited others, to interfere in the slightest way with the blessed inefficients.

Lenin, in every sense the greatest figure of the Revolution, realised this early in the programme, and such was his force of character that he succeeded in convincing his fellows of the fact.

The first act of the Dictator on realising that Communism could not—at least for a considerable time—work efficiently, was to scrap it. He did not put it so bluntly, but that is what he meant, and what he did. For the collective principal he instituted a New Economic Policy, and for some years Russia made moderate progress under what was practically Capitalism masquerading as Communism. Had Lenin not instituted N.E.P. and kept it going for as long as he did, Russia would have been in a state of anarchy comparable only with modern China.

Green indeed looked the Bolshevich fields during

the fat period of N.E.P., and if distant Communists had felt the call of the land of their convictions before, they felt it many times more keenly when returning comrades told them of the prosperity and happiness to be found in Russia. So it was that every ship reaching Russia carried its complement of enlightened emigrés from capitalist countries, and for many of these comrades a niche was found in the promised land.

Now let us trace the story of one such family, a history which has its beginning in sunny Australia and which ended—as far as I was concerned—on the icy Siberian steppes. It is a story of Siberia, land of chains, but chains that were forged not of steel or of any other metal, but were made of invisible all-powerful economic urge.

I was on my way to Guriev when the small local train was suddenly stopped—the reader will realise how common such incidents are in Russia as my story continues—and I was compelled to proceed by peasant cart. This brought me to the works I was visiting somewhat later than I had anticipated.

Next morning as I left the house, I was amazed to hear my name called in perfect English, and swung round to see a good-looking young man eagerly coming towards me.

“ Might I speak to you a moment—— ” he began, and then, after a split second’s hesitation and a cautious look about him “ ——*sir* ? ”

I had been in Russia long enough to appreciate that term, and I readily acquiesced, at the same time

wondering what on earth this young fellow could want, and puzzling as to his nationality. As we walked he told me his story, but not before I had taken the precaution of sending my interpreter into the background on some errand. Interpreters in modern Russia are men and women to beware of.

"It's like this, sir," the young man told me. "I heard only yesterday that a British specialist was coming to look over the works and I made up my mind to see you. This is the first opportunity I have had in Russia of getting a word with one of my own people and I feel sure that you will help me."

"If it lies in my power, certainly," I replied, but having grown cautious since my arrival in Russia, I told him bluntly that I could do nothing that could in any way be construed as an action against the Soviet Government. This did not appear to depress him.

"I know you couldn't, sir," he answered, "But let me tell you what I want. My parents were Russian and times were so bad under the Tsar that they emigrated to Australia. They simply hadn't a chance in Russia. In fact it was pretty certain that my father would have found himself right here in Siberia, if he had stayed. Instead," here the young man broke off and laughed bitterly, "his unfortunate son finds himself here, and with one chance in a million of ever getting out."

"You are not a prisoner?" I inquired, somewhat surprised.

The young man shook his head. "Not in the sense you mean," he answered. "There are no prisons in Russia in the sense that there are in other parts of the world. No, I am a free worker, but I cannot leave this district without starving, and I certainly would not be permitted to leave the country. However, to return to my people."

"We did very well in Australia, where I was born and went to school. My father was never a rich man, but he built up a comfortable business, even though he spent quite a lot of time and money espousing the ever-blessed Revolution. There was a little colony of Russian emigrés in Australia, and most of us knew each other, with the natural result that hatred of Russia, as it then was, was about the only subject we ever discussed. I can't say it impressed me very much and if it did I have changed considerably since I have been here."

"The Revolution came and my father determined to return to Russia. I was fairly young at the time, and had to do as my parents wished. But I can assure you, Mr. Westgarth, that I was thoroughly happy in Australia, and had I been of age, they would never have dragged me over here."

"Where are your parents now?" I queried, my interest rapidly growing.

He waved his hands about him, indicating the drab weariness of the village. It was a gesture eminently Russian, and served, better than words, to express his hatred for this place of exile, to escape from which he was prepared to take any chance.

This young man and his family were held in Siberia by bonds stronger than steel. The prisoners of other days could fight the snow, the chain and the gaol ; but what force can fight organised hunger, or the State, when it is merged into one ruthless, all-powerful weapon of oppression ?

He continued with his story. Apparently, like most revolutionaries, his father had expected to be received with honour when he returned to the land from which he had been driven by his political beliefs. He shared the fate that befell many with similar convictions. The men who control the new Russia had no use for those who had devoted their lives to the overthrowing of the Tsar and had suffered cruelly in consequence. The old man liked this state of affairs even less than he liked the old régime and finally he was sent with his family to Siberia.

In this village where there was no happiness they lived out their lives. I remembered that when I had arrived late last evening, a sense of oppression, greater than anything I had ever experienced in Russia, seemed to hang over the filthy hovels of this " collectivised " village. The village itself might have been Dartmoor prison, bleak, horrible and infinitely saddening. But it was the ideal penal camp, this village of mourning, for the State need pay no warders. The prisoners spied on one another, forced to do so, under the ruthless system that the Communists have built up during the past few years.

"Well, there you are, Mr. Westgarth," the young man at last told me. "Do you think you could get me a chance?"

"You mean help you to escape from Russia?" I asked doubtfully, for although this young man's story rang true, and touched me to the core, I dare not take the risk of trusting him until I was absolutely convinced of his genuineness. Cleverer tricks than these have been played in Russia by the agents of the O.G.P.U.

"Escape!" he cried incredulously, and then burst out laughing. "Not a chance, Mr. Westgarth. In any case, I would not ask you to go that far."

"No, all that I am hoping is that you will get me transferred to Moscow—I might be useful to you as I speak English. Can you do it?"

I replied from the bottom of my heart, and frankly admit that I cared not whether or no the entire O.G.P.U. was in hiding about me. "Yes, I will," I replied, "If it is humanly possible I will get you into my own office, and if there is one chance in the world of getting you out of here and back into a more civilised community I will take it."

Have you ever read of a prisoner receiving a pardon or a condemned man accepting a reprieve? Compare those unhappy victims of life with this poor victim of fanatical economists. What difference could there be? This young man was shown a faint ray of hope, was told that a countryman would help him to escape from a thralldom that was steadily

breaking him down, which had robbed him of everything that made life worth while. I shudder even now as I think of that boy's fate out there.

Eventually, the reader will probably be glad to learn, I was in a position to make good my promise, and was able to make him much happier by securing his transfer to Tomsk headquarters. It would not be difficult for me to quote a score of instances, which would be enough to convince anyone that the conditions of all but a favoured section of the community is one of penal servitude.

However, let me impress this great essential point on all working men and women who read these pages. I am a worker myself, have been one all my life. As I write these lines Capitalism has got itself into such a mess that it can find no use for the services of millions of skilled workers, and men must needs suffer because of this.

Such a state of affairs cries frankly for a remedy and the astounding apathy of financiers, politicians, and so called social leaders is rapidly bringing matters to a crisis. It is a crisis that we have been long in coming to, because our people are thoroughly patient. But they cannot for ever endure the inane activities of their leaders which force them to starve in the midst of plenty. Any creed, no matter how impracticable, will eventually appeal to men driven to the verge of madness by hunger and poverty, and it is to the great men of the earth that I address this word of warning. I beg them to do something—anything—to avert the crisis that must come unless

vital reforms are made. What form will this crash take, you ask. I reply Communism, for Russia has made Communism a great and powerful force to-day. Hungry men and women make fertile soil for the seed of red revolution, and nobody knows this better than the men in command in Moscow.

Throughout the world their agents have spread the seeds of disaffection and strife, and unless relief comes soon for the oppressed that seed must spread to blood-red bloom.

And to the workers I address this message as follows :—No matter what your conditions now, you would be worse under Communism. You would live as convicts—or as workhouse inmates—under conditions that, poor though you may be now, you would never tolerate under our present much abused Capitalist system.

CHAPTER IX

SOVIETS FOUND BY JUSTICE

THE removal from office of Lukatskoff, who was acting as President of the Metallurgical Section of the Supreme Economic Council, came as something of a personal blow to me, for I had come to regard him as one of the few men in Russia in authority who knew his job, and to whom one could look for assistance, and when I finally reached him with the story of my bad treatment in Siberia he was incensed.

I was explaining things to Lukatskoff, when he suddenly rang his bell and asked for the Red director of the Trust to be sent into his office. When the latter arrived, Lukatskoff taxed him immediately with his failure to settle my financial affairs, and with not having attended to his personal instructions regarding my house and furniture.

After all my efforts, and the repeated disregard of orders this was indeed pleasant to hear, and although I bore no personal ill-will against the director it was satisfying to know that Lukatskoff was one of the few men in Russia who gave orders which he expected to be obeyed.

The director replied that he had been over-

whelmed with work and gave a plausible tale of mislaid correspondence and so on. However, the interpreter told me that he had admitted to Lukatskoff that he had disregarded certain of the latter's telegrams and it would have been clear to me, even without this interpretation, that Lukatskoff's fury was growing.

Then Lukatskoff let himself go. The interpreter could not speak rapidly enough to translate each word as the chief uttered it, but with what he did tell me and with what I gathered myself, the director was within very short distance of serious trouble. As I watched the quarrel, I saw him grow more and more agitated, and he was still pleading with hands clasped and outstretched to Lukatskoff, when that official turned and fired questions at Belinkiss. The interpreter turned to me.

"He wants you to say that this man has not done his work and has broken your contract," the interpreter told me. "If you will say that, he will send him to the courts."

The director's anguish was pitiful. He pleaded, tears almost starting to his eyes, his arms outstretched in turn to his chief and myself. Looking back at that moment, I can imagine his feelings pretty accurately. He was supposed to be a Communist, a trusted man, and one clever enough to be feathering his own nest while advancing the cause of the Revolution. He knew enough of the Communist Party to realise its short way with traitors, and must have known that if he were sent to the courts, and my

testimony was investigated, his chance of escape was pretty small. At best he could only escape with exile and slow starvation which inevitably befalls a sheep thus lost from the folds of the "Party."

Lukatskoff looked at me grimly, awaiting my answer. I turned to Belinkiss.

"Be very careful," I warned the interpreter. "I do not want this man to go to the courts. Tell Lukatskoff I am going to say nothing of the kind."

Belinkiss repeated the words to Lukatskoff as I said them and I saw the president sink back in his chair with amazement and at the same time heard a deep sigh of relief from the director.

"Tell him," I continued, "That I have come to Russia to build, not to destroy. Tell him that if people get in the way, make trouble and prevent me from saving money for my employers I cannot help it. You have all my schemes down in black and white and the economies, and you must know whether you intend to take advantage of them or not. I think you should clear the way and let me get on with my building. I don't want anybody to be put to trouble. All I want is to be allowed to do my work."

Lukatskoff's next action amazed me. He jumped from his chair, grinding his teeth, and paced furiously up and down the room. When finally he did speak it was to ask Belinkiss what manner of man I was. In effect, he said that with all the evidence of this man's guilt in the matter, I neglected to take any action, and did not want him punished.

"That is the difference between what I was taught as a boy in England and the teaching of the Soviet to-day," I replied.

I was perfectly frank, and told him his best way of getting over the whole affair was to let me have my own way, make reports, submit them and leave the rest to him. If he liked I could go ahead, but it was impossible for me to work if I was to receive no co-operation. Nor would I continue to act for him if my suggestions for the improvements of the workers' conditions were not acted upon.

Lukatskoff rapidly got over his temporary anger, and asked me to lunch with him. I could hardly help smiling at this, for I knew him as a man of extremely frugal habits, in spite of the enormous power he wielded. He dismissed the director like a naughty schoolboy, and then produced "lunch."

One had to see Lukatskoff at lunch to realise that here was a really great man. He demands sacrifices of all classes of the community, but unlike some of his comrades, he shares those sacrifices himself. His lunch that day consisted of some bread and cheese, with only the tea, which we shared, to wash it down.

During the meal we talked of the theatre amongst other things, and I found that Lukatskoff took a keen interest in this branch of art, and was in fact an advanced intellectual, but blessed with the ability to understand mentalities different from his own. He stands out in my memory as one of the few active men which the Revolution has produced ;

but such is the Soviet to-day, that his very incorruptibility made him something to be distrusted by the higher officials of the U.S.S.R.

This was the man who had to be removed from office because he constituted a danger to those who were profiting by the purchase of expensive machinery from America. I may say here that nothing was ever said by me to any officials that would give them grounds for believing that we were not prepared to adopt American methods. All I did was to place before them the facts showing them that British machinery was cheaper, often with the same American design, and leave them to judge.

Lukatskoff told me that I should not devote myself too much to my work, and asked me how I spent my evenings. He seemed very surprised when I told him that they were usually spent at home with my books, and in the company of my wife and son, and I laughingly remarked, "You ought to marry and settle down yourself. Wouldn't you like a son or a daughter?" He smiled, and waved his hands at the latter remark, and announced, "I have no time for such things, Mr. Westgarth, my life is the Revolution."

This interview took place in December, and Lukatskoff asked me before I left to attend a scientific council at the State Planning Institute, Leningrad, in January of the following year. He also said that he was arranging for me to travel to South Russia—a trip which he had long promised me—and asked me to go back to Tomsk, but to be sure and return for

the actual council meeting. After which it could be arranged for me to go to the South of Russia.

He considered that my attendance at that meeting was imperative, as my views were required as an imported specialist, and the reader will get a good insight into Soviet methods when I describe what followed.

On leaving Lukatskoff, I went to the Moscow headquarters of the Trust, where I met the Red director; in a most friendly manner I was greeted. He told me how glad he was at the trend of events and promised to help me in every way possible, and taking both my hands shook them enthusiastically, much to my embarrassment, thanking me profusely for what I had done for him in Lukatskoff's office. I was later to learn that his gratitude for my action was short-lived.

I returned to Tomsk to my work there, but the director did not return, as he informed me he would. This left me in a position where I could not get any money on the spot. The time of the State Planning Council came and went, and I received a telegram from Lukatskoff asking why I had not attended the meeting as he had requested.

Of course, I sent the only possible reply; that none of us could find the director and that I could not leave Tomsk for the simple reason that there was nobody there to authorise my expenditure for the journey. By this time I had had quite enough of spending my own money on behalf of the Soviet, and intended to waste no more in that way. I made

this pretty clear to Lukatskoff, and hoped that some action would be taken as a result of my ultimatum.

I was disappointed, and came into contact with the director, who now arrived thirteen days late—minus the gloves—for the first time. From Jerome in Moscow I learned afterwards that Lukatskoff had been transferred from his position in the Supreme Economic Council as President of the Metallurgical Section to that of President of the Timber Trusts of the U.S.S.R.

Thirteen days after my arrival in Tomsk, a meeting of the executives of the Trust was called which I was invited to attend. The director evidently knew of the removal of Lukatskoff, despite the fact that his former chief was in the Urals at the time, for in the presence of the executives and others he told me that he would strip me of my possessions and position and make me a pauper!

I was astounded, and realised that, with my wife and son, I stood in very grave danger. This man had revealed himself as he was, thoroughly unscrupulous, and now that Lukatskoff was gone—this, of course, I did not know at the time, but I feared that something was wrong—he could do almost anything he liked. However, it was no occasion to show the white feather.

“You might do it to your own countrymen, but you will never do it to me,” and I slammed my British passport down on the table. “And now,” I said, “do your damndest!” and walked out, determined to leave Tomsk as soon as possible.

A rash action, but one that, by a stroke of good luck, saved me. He was afraid to go too far, but it was only my British nationality of which he was afraid. The fact that I asserted it at the right moment and told him what must have been in his mind throughout all his blustering saved me. He climbed down and only stayed another forty-eight hours in Tomsk.

It was now clear to me that my work at Tomsk and elsewhere was being absolutely wasted. During my second visit to Tomsk I worked day and night on economies and designs for the works, and had made some progress, although it was in no way commensurate with the efforts of my staff and myself. I told my wife it was unlikely that we should be returning to Tomsk. I now learned from Jerome in Moscow that Lukatskoff had been removed to the Timber Trusts.

So now I began to feel the hand of the director in a more subtle manner. At the interview he mentioned something about trouble regarding the house and that the landlord was going to bring a case at the courts in Tomsk. We did not pay a great deal of attention to this at the time and naturally forgot the whole matter, listing it as personal malice on the part of this man. But if I had forgotten it the director had not.

I received a peremptory summons to attend a general court at Tomsk, where all disputes are tried on Communist lines. A civil code has recently been adopted throughout Russia, but only those of proved

proletarian status are eligible to have their cases heard there. I wondered how I should fare there, and whether I was classed as a worker. I did not at that stage know what were the precise charges I had to meet. It was only some time during the "hearing" that I learned definitely with what I was "charged."

We attended the court as summoned, and I was amazed to find the magistrate a young woman, no more than twenty-two years old. She was typical of the devout young Communist in Russia—in fact you may find her counterpart in any of the social revolutionary movements throughout the world. She was supported by two men, one on her right and the other on her left. A great deal of argument was going on as we entered, and through my interpreter I learned that a peasant was being tried for illicit vodka distilling and manslaughter. He had two soldiers, with fixed bayonets, to guard him.

I did not follow the case very closely, but it was clear that most of them seemed biased against him. I gathered from the interpreter that he lost his case, the verdict being withheld for two weeks. Then came my own case—whatever the trouble was I had left in the hands of my lawyer and he whispered in my ear that word had come through from Moscow that the case must go in my favour. This did not amaze me so much as it probably will the reader, for I had already grown used to the strange Russian mentality, which does the queerest things for the most peculiar reasons.

I merely replied that I didn't care how the verdict went ; that the charges against me were baseless, and that I had attended the court to show no disrespect to the Soviets but I did want to understand the proceedings.

Then my lawyer arose and addressed the court. The interpreter followed him closely and told me in English—in ordinary tones—what he was saying. I was astounded, for instead of going into the facts of the case, the lawyer was giving an impassioned recital of the career of the landlord—what a rogue he was, etc., to the judge, or whatever title is accorded a woman on the Russian bench. She interjected periodically, and both delivered themselves of much hearty sentiment regarding the Revolution. Now and again some of the spectators joined in and the whole affair was like a Socialist meeting in some benighted city where the blessings of Communism have not yet been generally adopted.

When this farce was over, the interpreter informed me that judgment had been entered in my favour. I was privileged, with my wife also, to shake hands with the judge and jury, and we departed. It would have been just the same if the court had been instructed to find me guilty. If this case convinced me of anything it was that those people were certainly somewhat crazy, to say the least. However, on reflection, it merely goes to show the power which Communist officials wield. Without any basis in fact, the director had allowed me to be charged before a court which had extreme powers. I might

easily have been sentenced to imprisonment, and any inquiries by my government would have received the reply that I was liable to Soviet penalties if I broke their laws.

Incidentally, I saw a copy of a local paper of the trial, and it was pointed out to me that the reporter was careful to state that I was an American, and not an English specialist.

On January 20th I received a cablegram from Bourov to be at the State Planning Institute by February 1st. I also telegraphed to M. Trautmann, Chairman of the Scientific Council at Moscow, asking what had been done regarding my economies which had been referred to his department. He replied that they were being examined, and that I would be called to Moscow to discuss them.

Sick and weary of the whole miserable business, we left Tomsk—never to return—and after the unusually long journey of six days—owing to snow and storms—we arrived in Moscow—and entrained immediately for Leningrad. I visited the State Planning Institute soon after arrival, and could get no information regarding Lukatskoff. I recalled his last words to me.

“Those economies are going through whatever happens.”

Something had happened—to Lukatskoff.

CHAPTER X

MORE ABOUT FINANCE

THROUGHOUT my stay in the U.S.S.R. as an official technical advisor, my financial affairs were never once in order. I assume that the reader is familiar with the strange workings of the Russian currency system, so that it is necessary only for me to stress the fact that Russian roubles are quite valueless outside that country. In these circumstances, therefore, I was only prepared to accept a Russian contract on the conditions that part of my salary was paid monthly into a British bank.

But if Russia wants the foreign specialist for his brains she is not disposed to carry out her obligations to him once he is secure within those boundaries wherein the Soviet is supreme.

On my return to the capital I learned the details of Lukatskoff's untimely transfer to the Timber Trusts, and was informed that my contract would now be transferred to the N.K.R.K.I. After I had sanctioned this transfer I was faced with the astounding news that I owed the Soviet Government 6,000 roubles, though how this astounding figure was arrived at I have not the slightest idea. However,

I later learned that such methods were by no means unusual where foreign technicians were concerned, and that barefaced robbery, expropriation and downright swindling are usually employed within a few months of a specialist's arrival in the U.S.S.R.

I was naturally indignant and through the intervention of friends I was enabled to see Sludsky, secretary of the Communist cell in the O.G.P.U. and recognised as one of the most important men in that institution. I interviewed this "great" man in his office in the O.G.P.U. building on the Lubianka and he straightway asked me to recount to him everything that had happened during my stay in Russia. This I did; he asked questions and listened intently to the recital. My interpreter was a Communist well known in the inner circles in London and Moscow, between which two cities he frequently travels. This was the longest interview I have ever had and lasted the greater part of the day. At the conclusion of our talk Sludsky asked me to call the following morning and continue.

Next day we arrived fully prepared for a long talk, and to my surprise found Sludsky in the full uniform of an officer of the O.G.P.U. He had to attend some State function in the afternoon. Apparently even the Bolshevics are not averse to well-tailored uniforms, for Comrade Sludsky presented a very smart figure in his dust-coloured overcoat, cerise decoration, and smart top-boots. He was called away, but before going told me that

they had implicit trust in me and that they would investigate everything I had laid before them. Regarding my personal financial affairs he asked me to go over to the Supreme Economic Council and there meet one M. Gurievitch, to whom he telephoned, and who would put things straight. Telling me at the same time that but for one Mansanov and himself some of the foreign groups would have had me out of Russia some three months earlier.

I had some doubts as to M. Gurievitch's financial settlement of my affairs. I had heard something of his methods in "settling" Russia's debts to England and had no desire to have my own affairs handled on a similar basis. Naturally the word of a man like Sludsky was acceptable to me.

When I saw Gurievitch his chief desire seemed to be to learn what had passed in Sludsky's office. However, I was not disposed to give out much information, and merely replied that Sludsky had assured me that he, Gurievitch, would settle my finances. This seemed to considerably relieve him, and he told me one of his assistants would deal with the matter and everything would be adjusted. I was rapidly learning that in modern Russia passing the "baby" is a most popular pastime. As I later learned from Verom, another of Sludsky's assistants, I was convinced that Gurievitch was merely outwardly keeping faith with Sludsky, and that actually he did not care much whether my finances were settled or not.

I am mentioning all this to show the chaotic state

of affairs in Russia generally, and also to prove how it is possible for a Government to break its word, and at the same time to leave loop-holes through which it can wriggle. Actually I hope to prove the word of any Soviet official is wholly unreliable, and the man who accepts it is asking for trouble.

When I saw Beerman, the assistant of Gurievitch, he nodded sullenly and said that he had come to the conclusion I was a British Trade Agent. No mention was made regarding my financial settlement although he pretended to take copious notes of my statements. Almost as though it had been arranged a number of engineers from the State Planning Institute came into Beerman's office during my interview, and a Soviet meeting rapidly developed. It was ever a Russian delight to hold a meeting whenever there were sufficient people available for such a purpose, and since the Revolution the engineers had plenty of time and opportunity for enjoying this simple pastime which merely holds up important work, and results in nothing tangible at all. And now comes the astonishing example of O.G.P.U. sagacity and Russian stupidity.

The Russians like to talk and so all kinds of ideas were promulgated and decisions taken, verbally. This continued for about three hours and scarcely one of them had noticed a quiet figure enter during the early part of the conversation. The newcomer nodded pleasantly to me, and I recognised M. Trautmann whom I had known as Chairman of the Scientific Council. It is so usual in Russia for a

stranger to enter a room, and casually listen to a conversation that nobody took the slightest notice.

I was surprised, however, and later made inquiries which revealed to me the interesting fact that Trautmann had been made assistant to Beerman, and as this was a much lower position than he formerly occupied, I thought at the time it was a peculiar move. His presence had absolutely no effect on the conversation, and the engineers continued to argue their points. Trautmann left just before I did, and within a short time some of the engineers present had been arrested by the O.G.P.U. orders.

They obviously placed Trautmann, one of the most highly qualified men in Russia, in Beerman's office with a view to getting evidence which would support the case made out against some of the Russian engineers. After this interview I returned to my quarters, when things commenced to move more rapidly than at any time since my arrival in Russia. It became obvious to me that Sludsky, for all his seeming pre-occupation, had been moved to action by my story, and that he suspected that Gurievitch was not treating the matter fairly. This determined him to order an inquiry into the whole affair, and it was as a result of this inquiry that within a few days I found myself requested to attend a commission which would settle matters for me.

This commission was presided over by one of the strangest personalities I met in the Soviet Union, Dr. Rutyers, a Dutchman, who is one of the

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mystery figures of the Soviet. I imagine that the O.G.P.U. deliberately appointed him to the Commission, in the first place so that his chairmanship would command greater respect from me, and in the second because the O.G.P.U. chief was aware of his own limitations and hoped that Rutyers would get valuable information from me. At this stage, I have no reason to doubt that the Soviet was seriously concerned over the slow movement of the Five-Year Plan workings and were at last beginning to place some reliance on my reports.

Dr. Rutyers was a personal friend of Lenin during the early days of the Revolution, and although he holds no official position of any kind he invariably sits on commissions of inquiry. He is noted for his sagacity, and I was greatly impressed by his impartial and well-balanced views. An educated man, and obviously cultured, he is of medium height, about 50 years old, with blue eyes and a small pointed beard. His clothes were of English cut and immaculate.

In addition to Rutyers, Dr. Frankel, M. Averom and two delegates from the Supreme Economic Council sat at the meeting. Three of them, including the President, and Averom acknowledged a debt to me of Rs. 4,000, and asked me what I thought of it. Frankel, however, expressed his disagreement with the whole thing, and when I told them that I must insist on the money being paid into the British bank he became indignant. When I asked why he objected to this being done, he replied that I should

be content to accept the money in roubles, saying that I would show sympathy with Russia—my employer—by so doing.

I happened to know that Frankel, a German, received the very best from the Soviet, and that both he and his well-dressed wife made frequent trips to Germany, so that his suggestions annoyed me considerably.

“Why do you object to my being paid in *my* own currency?” I demanded, stressing the pronoun. “My contract calls for it, so that I am only demanding what is mine by legal right. At all events, I have already let one man off in spite of his bad behaviour, so why should you expect further sacrifices.”

This was, of course, a shrewd thrust, for they all were aware that but for my forgiving attitude the Red director would probably have been dealt with severely for allowing my affairs to get into such a muddle. M. Averom was very pleased at these remarks and announced that he thought I should have my money paid in accordance with my contract. This does not mean, however, that Averom was a man of great virtue; he was merely on the lookout for an important position, which he got later, and realised that my influence in high quarters was growing. Dr. Rutyers nodded his head in agreement, and I believe that I should have won the day except for a very foolish action which afterwards I was bitterly to regret.

Annoyed at the attitude of Frankel, I told him

that I would keep strictly to the word of my original letters to Russia, in which I had stressed the fact that I was not going to the Union to make a fortune. If it would satisfy them, and at the same time simplify matters for their Government, I was prepared to waive my right and accept Rs. 4,000 in their own currency. Looking back I have nothing but regret for that rash action, but taking all in all I am inclined to believe that perhaps it saved me from greater trouble later. There was no doubt that Comrade Sludsky was immediately informed of my decision and this fact was sufficient to prevent a charge of anti-Soviet activities which might very easily have been "framed" against me by some of my rivals.

So sudden was my decision that everyone was astounded. Averom rose hastily from his seat and left the room, presumably to telephone the news to Gurievitch. I told Frankel to make out a receipt in his own handwriting and that I would sign it. He did so and the conference broke up, after Dr. Rutyers had shaken hands with me and told me he would always remember me kindly. Someone then brought in the roubles which were handed to me and I left for my hotel.

Strangely enough on arrival at the hotel I was presented with a bill for 4,000 roubles, precisely the sum I had received from the commission. Not only was I required to pay this sum but an extra twelve and a half per cent. because the bill had not been settled earlier. Procuring a stamped receipt

I immediately took the official car back to the N.K.R.K.I. where I found Averom seated in his office. I placed the receipt before him ; he rang for an interpreter and asked me whether I was satisfied with the bill and with my settlement. I replied that I would leave him to be the judge. He seemed puzzled at this and shrugged his shoulders helplessly. However, I impressed on him the fact that at the conference I had tried to show my sincerity and that I was willing to put up with even this latest treatment if only I could be guaranteed that things would be better in the future.

Through Averom and others I learned that the commission had been appointed with a view not only to probe the whole affair, but to find out just how far the machinations of corrupt " comrades " were affecting the cherished Plan. When I returned to Tomsk, Lukatskoff had appointed a book-keeper to accompany me and this man had been suborned by the Red director there. Actually he was to have made an independent account to Lukatskoff, in which event I do not see how the director could possibly have avoided serious charges. As it was, this man presented utterly baseless charges against me to Lukatskoff's successor, hence the confusion at the headquarters which had only been cleared up when Sludsky took the matter in hand.

Good fortune must surely have stood on my side during this troubled period, for I learned that not only had the book-keeper backed by the Red director made me out as indebted to the government, but

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he had persuaded those in authority not to authorise my expenses for the first trip to Moscow. Thus preventing my attending the conference in Leningrad in January.

Suspensions were now thoroughly aroused, and the director, who was by this time in America, had several unpleasant things to explain on his return.

by Westgarth, John R.

CHAPTER XI

THE SPOKEN WORD

IF the Revolution has accomplished nothing else it has given the power to the "theorists" in office to sit and talk to their hearts' content, or at least until someone or other draws the attention of the O.G.P.U. to the fact that nothing has been done, when arrests and trials are likely to follow.

These are the main causes of the failure of the Plan—too much talk, too many arrests—and the resultant complete confusion.

The Soviet announce the Plan has been a success—on paper at least—but they cannot deny the fact that works of all descriptions all over the Union are much behind schedule and in some cases in a state of utter chaos, although they were supposed to be in production at the close of the Five Year Plan.

An excellent example of this state of affairs is afforded by the Magnetogorsk Iron and Steel Works in the Urals, which will be one of the largest works of its kind in the world—when it is completed. In order that the reader may not become confused by technicalities I am limiting myself only to essentials in the following sketch.

THE SPOKEN WORD

The so-called experts who arranged the Five Year Plan were drawn from every department in Russia, and the Committee which propounded it was supposed to be representatives of the best brains in the country. It was, in fact, representative of the people occupying the highest and most comfortable positions; whether they were the cleverest is altogether another matter. These "experts" decided that the great Magnetogorsk scheme could be included in the Plan.

After the passage of some months and under the direction of numerous departments such as "Gosplan," "State Planning Institute," "Stahl," "Novostahl," "Gipromash," "Cokesostroy," and others, plans and specifications for the Magnetogorsk were finally produced. A commission was sent to America and as a result one of the most reputed American engineering firms were contracted to give technical advice and supply engineers to supervise the erection.

Preliminary negotiations once over, the Americans prepared to fulfil their side of the contract to the letter and sent experts to the U.S.S.R. to assist the Soviet engineers. The technicians sent were naturally first-class men and their advice would have been invaluable anywhere in the world—except Russia. They gave their advice which in any normal country would have been investigated in a proper manner, and no doubt acted upon. But the Soviet engineers merely listened, wagged their heads, and with great affectation of knowledge, proceeded to do exactly as they liked, which in the majority of cases,

was exactly the opposite. Under such circumstances, the confusion which ensued reached enormous proportions and naturally the work suffered in consequence.

It was whilst I was at the N.K.R.K.I. in Moscow and consulting with the Commissar of the Metallurgical Section in his private office, that the door suddenly burst open and a young Russian engineer rushed into the room, gesticulating violently and shouting to the Commissar in a very agitated manner. He was calmed by other officials who rushed after him and asked him to state his business. In short he told of mismanagement and corruption at Magnetogorsk by his Russian colleagues in spite of all the sound advice given by the Americans and German specialists. He claimed that someone was sure to be shot and he did not want to be that person. So much of the conversation I could understand, my interpreter told me more later. They let him have his say, then asked him to go to another room and write out his report.

There can be little doubt that arrests resulted.

Meanwhile an appeal was received at the N.K.R.K.I. for a plan of procedure, and through this the Commissar came to my room one morning with two other officials and asked me to make out a programme. Even at that stage had my instructions been carried out they would have had a reasonable chance of completing the major portion of the job within the period allotted by the Five-Year Plan.

However, for my own protection I included the

following significant heading: "Subject to labour being available and material and machinery being delivered in sequence." Just how stiff a proposition this was for Russia will be seen later. The authorities were overwhelmed with gratitude. They shook me by the hand and told me that I had saved the situation. Their problem was solved for them—at least on paper—and the Plan could proceed.

The last I saw of this programme was as a decoration in the form of a coloured chart hanging in a conspicuous position in the office of the Commissar. This apparently was as far as it ever got, for no evident improvement was registered in the affairs of Magnetogorsk, and even to-day this plant is only in partial operation and my firm conviction is that it will not be in full operation in another five years.

Other writers have said that this is one of the "show" plants of the Soviet. But I have heard little said of similar kinds of iron and steel works being built within a radius of a thousand miles of Magnetogorsk, all of which are in a similar state of confusion, quite apart from larger steel works which are being built in South Russia, such as Mariupol, Liepitsk, Neprostahl, etc., drawings and schedules of which passed through my hands.

The sacrifices of the Russian people forced on them by the high priests of Communism and the utter impossibility under such conditions of even partially completing such enormous programmes, makes it obvious to even the non-technical person

that the much talked of Five-Year Plan was doomed to failure before it started. The whole thing is abortive for the standard of civilisation throughout the U.S.S.R. and especially seeing they hardly have any industry working as a financial asset to the State, apart from oil. For what is all this sacrifice of the Russian people? They are worse off to-day than ever, with no hope from the State of lighter burdens in the future.

I only touch the surface of this one industry, iron and steel, to give an idea of the chaos prevailing. This industry, of course, is probably the most costly and takes premier place, but what is to be said of many other industries of which I heard much during my travels.

It was one of the tenets of the Five Year Plan that sacrifices were only temporary and that when it was completed the workers would live in plenty. Propaganda of every kind has been used to convince the workers of this, and in dull apathy they accepted it. To secure the valuta which they must spend on foreign machinery, the Soviet has gone to extreme lengths. Russian money has no value abroad and in consequence they must conscript every farthing of foreign currency available in Russia. This end has been achieved by ruthlessly stripping the peasantry and bourgeoisie of nearly everything they possessed and selling it. Some of the expropriated property is sold abroad, while much of it goes to tourists in return for their currency.

The result is that not only are the workers poorly

fed, but they have only the barest necessities in the way of clothing. The newly constructed dwellings are often handed over to foreigners and the workers are left to exist under any conditions they can find.

In their efforts to eradicate the hated bourgeoisie the Communists penalised technicians, office workers and former Government officials in every possible way. This was all very well before they decided on the Five Year Plan, but when that idea was born there was a frantic search for members of the hated class. Persons of those skilled professions, peacefully working as labourers, or other proletarian pursuits, were not anxious to obey the call and resume their old status. Most of them realised that their task would be to teach their jobs to proletarians and that as soon as they had done this, they would be flung on the industrial scrap-heap ! All these people knew that they could not place the slightest value on the word of the Government, and were not prepared to lay themselves open to a fate worse than that they were already undergoing.

However, in various ways the Soviet scraped together sufficient technicians to form a nucleus of a new technical class and immediately commenced training men and women from amongst the young proletarians. In some cases the pupils were adept, but in the majority of cases absolutely useless. Yet these men were accepted by the Soviet and labelled "technicians" and let loose in every Russian workshop. The chaotic result is better imagined than described.

We have widespread unemployment in the British Isles and the sole desire of millions of people is to find work to do. In Russia the opposite is the position. They have work for all, but their millions of workers are unable to keep the pace which is demanded by the Soviet. Why? The answer is very simple. No matter how hard the Russian works at the present time he can get no more in return than his ration card—a practically valueless wage, and the uncomfortable quarters in which he exists. He has no incentive to earn more. At the present moment the Russian peasant is more rebellious than ever. He had been ruthlessly collectivised, given his freedom, and collectivised again, yet the Soviet cannot exterminate his individualism.

The ordinary working classes of Russia on the whole are apathetic. One cannot expect much else as they are the direct descendants of the Serfs, and the Bolshevics are learning that the only way to make such people work is to "drive" them or to "draw" them. Under the present system the former is quite useless. You can drive a man with a whip. Tsarist Russia did this and failed; you can "draw" him with "better things to come"—but the Soviet cannot use this "bait" any longer. After all, "better" things are only relative, and in Communist Russia the range of Relativity is professedly small.

That, in a nutshell, is the chief problem which faced me during my stay in Russia. The mismanagement and corruption, the over-lapping, ignor-

ance and sheer stupidity one might have tolerated, but the apathetic workmen, careless of the future which they cannot imagine, hungry and disconsolate, are an obstacle which no man can surmount.

The Soviet may bring into the land the finest brains in the world—engineers, shipbuilders, electricians and technicians of every kind—but it will never, as long as the people have no incentive to work, make any of that progress which its leaders and admirers in other countries fondly believe to be possible.

CHAPTER XII

THE STORY OF PETERS

THE collapse of the monarchical system in 1917 and the establishment of the provisional government brought about a state of affairs probably quite unprecedented in the annals of any modern country. The sons of Mother Russia exiled by the monarch were invited to return in their thousands. The new Russia opened wide its gates to the returning prodigals from all nations.

Even the prisons were opened, and there can be small doubt that the guilty marched out to freedom with the innocent. Everything was confusion, nobody could tell which was which, and nobody seemed to care very much.

Along with many other political prisoners set free was one Dzierjinsky. A Polish Social Democrat, whose name, in company with that of Peters, was to become a terror in the land, only to be spoken of in whispers and in fear and trembling as superstitious people speak of the demon.

It was only during the succeeding months that Peters and Dzierjinsky came into contact, but they were to remain in close connection from that time until the death of Dzierjinsky some years later.

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Came the Bolshevik *coup d'état* and the overthrow of the provisional government and Dzierjinsky always a man of strategy, recognised the need for a speedy change of colour from Social Democratic pink to Bolshevik red if he was to be amongst the favoured in the eyes of the people. He adjusted himself with the rapidity of light, as it were, and the lightning change was not in vain, for he was received into the Red fold with open arms. Peters needed no introduction to the Bolsheviks, his record was quite lurid enough in foreign countries as they well knew.

The Bolshevicki needed all the support they could muster to their standard in those days. The more desperate the man the better they liked him. One must remember that Lenin and his confederates had come into power not by numerical strength but by popular slogans handed out to a war-worn and revolution weary people. Slogans which worked the populace into a Red enthusiasm, whilst it raged at fever pitch, grasped the opportunity and seized the governmental offices and organisations and declared the new Government of the land. The Soviet of Peoples Commissars was a fact.

Lenin quickly realised that Soviet power could not weather the stormy days ahead if some method of counteracting the pendulum of public opinion was not put into action as soon as possible. The small numbers of the Bolshevik Party were anything but an asset, no matter how unscrupulous and confident they might be. Probably the annals of the French

Revolution gave him the key to the question, who can say ? In any case he chose Terror as his weapon and Dzierjinsky and Peters as its wielders. The Red sickle was to reap a bounteous harvest during the ensuing years, and Peters and Dzierjinsky remained to see the complete subjection of the Russian people to the iron will of Bolshevism.

Within a short space of time Dzierjinsky had begun to organise and place under his control bands of terrorists that had been let loose over the land during the stormy days of the Revolution. This was no small task. Undisciplined ruffians who have become so bold that they care for neither God nor devil and own no law save that which their unrestricted wishes dictate are not called to order from a comfortable office in Petersburg or Moscow. It was work for butchers ! Terror had to be struck into the hearts of the Terrorists.

Such was the mettle of these men that they succeeded beyond all expectations, and it was from these efforts and from such ungodly material that Dzierjinsky and Peters carved out a secret terrorist police for the new Red power.

The organisation was duly christened with the high-sounding title of the " Supreme Extraordinary Commission to Combat Counter-Revolution and Speculation." This title, however, soon shrunk to the composition of " Cheka "—terror its watchword, fear its motto. Its alleged gory deeds were to shock the world and although many do not believe the stories of its methods and think them so much



The official French police photograph of Bonnot, the bandit, alias Peter the Painter

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newspaper jargon they are, unfortunately for its victims, mostly true.

No one will ever know the difficulties Dzierjinsky and Peters surmounted in organising this secret service or what the cost in money, lives, blood and work. Peters was given charge of the new foreign section as he knew and could make contact with sections of the underworld in nearly all the important cities in Europe. This, of course, was the forerunner of later subversive activities which were carried on by the Soviet agents in all countries for the propagation of Communism and the breakdown of Capitalistic civilisation.

Peters is an extremely clever man and it is likely that he was chosen for this post by Dzierjinsky because of the fact that he had had an extremely unique career in many foreign countries and under many names and was well known by that strata of society which we class discontents. He is a daring schemer against the law, and has proved himself a match with the police of many lands and always got away scot-free. It is peculiar that the one who so many times has defied justice should now be in the position to dispense the same.

An episode of his career which took place in England will be interesting to the reader who remembers the much-talked-of Sidney Street Raid in 1911. Peters, acting his part under the nom de plume of Peter the Painter, was the leader of an anarchist gang which had gained an unsavoury reputation and whose activities had resulted in the sudden transi-

tion to another world of three policemen. One does not put a policeman "on the spot" in England and get away with it as a rule, but Peter the Painter did !

Tracing the gang to lodgings in Sidney Street, the police surrounded the building about six o'clock on the morning of January 3rd, 1911, and attempted to raid the premises. They were met with a volley of bullets which drove them to shelter, where I have no doubt they discussed with some wonder how such a thing could possibly be in peaceful England, to await reinforcements. A couple of hours later a further volley swept the street and this time the anarchists scored a bull, and an officer sank to the ground seriously wounded. By this time armed reinforcements had arrived on the scene and the volley was returned with interest. Crack shots of the police force hidden in odd corners and doorways tried their skill at wiping out the nuisance. There was silence for a little while as both sides no doubt had got tired at shooting chips out of the buildings, then a group of armed detectives standing at the entrance of an alley thought they saw a head at one of the windows and let fly with a regular fusilade. This kind of thing went on for some time, then one of the detectives did a very meritorious act. Dashing into the open street, he ran over to the house, and raising his rifle smashed the window glass and sped back to shelter. A bullet chipped the wall a couple of inches from his head as he leapt into cover. Time was drifting on and at ten o'clock a cheer rang out

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from the end of the street. Somebody said "It's the Guards come down from the Tower." Picked marksmen of the Scots Guards had come down to add to the scene. Shots now rang out continuously from both sides. A motor-car sped to the outskirts of the crowd and behold ! it was the Home Secretary himself arriving to direct operations. Mr. Churchill believes in being right at the scene of activities. He certainly put it into practice that day.

At about one o'clock smoke was seen issuing from the windows of the besieged house. It was on fire. Still no one issued from the interior. The interior was soon burning furiously. It seemed impossible that anything could stay in and live. Still nothing happened ; no figures staggered out to give themselves up to the minions of Law and Order—and Mr. Churchill.

"Blimey !" quoth one of the Guards. "But them blokes as got some pluck, so they 'ave. They're agoing to burn t' death sooner'n give in . . . Blimey !" A sharp glance from an officer froze him into silence.

When the fire subsided two charred skeletons were found, one identified as Fritz Svaars, the other as Jacob Vogel, both members of the gang. But of Peter the Painter there was not the slightest trace . . . it was found out later that he crossed to France on the S.S. *Suffolk*. One of the officers identified him from a police photograph. He had actually spoken to him, and he had had a friend with him, possibly another member of the gang.

He also has a record in France and did his deeds of derring-do under the name of Bonnot, known as the "Bandit," and, after a similar experience with the French police as he had with their English counterparts, escaped once again with a companion, across the border and out of France.

I found all this out in an odd manner. After my return to Moscow from Siberia I was visited by an official of the *Pravda*, the official Communist organ of the U.S.S.R., who asked me if I would be so good as to give him a write-up of the wonderful progress of the "Kuznietskstroy" conditions and the workers there, etc. I told him that on no account would his paper print anything I had to say as conditions at the "Kuznietskstroy" were anything but satisfactory and the workers on strike. His face dropped at this. "I thought maybe you would give it a boost," he said. "No," I answered, "I have plenty of trouble to tell you if that is any use to you." "I am sorry," he said, and departed. Mrs. Peters had been an interested listener to this conversation as well as several Communists who happened to be present. They all seemed to be rather astonished when I told them of the state of affairs in Siberia and Mrs. Peters suggested that it might help if I went up and had a talk with Peters himself. She said she would arrange it and I answered that if they thought anything good would result from the interview I should be only too pleased to go and talk to this much-talked-of man.

The interview with the redoubtable Peters was

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arranged very quickly. I was told by my Communist friends that they were sure the talk would do a lot of good and that on no account should I be anything but frank and open when speaking with him.

Taking a taxi next morning we soon arrived at the portentous buildings in which Peters' offices were housed.

Cross-examined at the entrance and relieved of our overcoats we were ushered into a lift which shot upwards three stories. Accompanying our guide down a corridor in a few seconds we were standing outside Peters' sanctum.

The padded door swung open to the summons of an electric bell and Peters' secretary invited us into the outer room of the suite.

A few moments later we met the man himself. He was seated behind a large table desk littered with papers, at his right hand a group of telephones.

Belinkiss, my interpreter, made to introduce me. I noticed that he was extremely nervous. He stuttered.

Peters waved his hand and dismissed him peremptorily. Rising from his chair he came over and, standing before me said "I understand English, although I cannot speak it too well. It is a long time since I used it." He smiled and I saw his brown eyes twinkle as he finished the sentence.

I must confess I began to like this white-haired, pug-nosed, quiet-demeanoured man despite the harrowing stories I had heard of his exploits.

"Well," he said, speaking in English with a very

perceptible accent, "I have arranged to see you so that you can tell me first-hand all about the conditions at Kuznietskstróy."

"Please be seated, then you may continue." He motioned me to a comfortable chair.

Seating himself once more behind his desk and leaning back in his spacious chair, he rested his elbows on the padded arms and, clasping his hands together, waited for my narrative in silence. I was soon well into my story and Peters took various short notes on a pad near his elbow. His remarks were few and very short.

I noticed a peculiar twisted smile flit across his features once or twice and I wondered at its purport. I began to feel instinctively that he was immensely amused about something but I said nothing of what I thought and continued with the account of the workers' conditions at Kuznietsk.

Five minutes later the telephone bell buzzed angrily and excusing himself he turned to the instrument.

Speaking for a few minutes into the mouthpiece he laughed heartily at some amusing remark and returned the earpiece to its hook. . . .

Rising to his feet, an odd smile on his lips, he asked me to further excuse him as he had just been called by Comrade Stalin to a private conference. "Would I be so good as to give all the details to his secretary as he must leave immediately. I shall read the notes on my return and see what can be done."

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Excusing himself once again he bowed courteously and turning, left the room. His secretary came in instantly and took all the details, and at 4 o'clock I left the building and returned to my hotel where I found awaiting me a group of my Communist friends anxious to hear the result.

I told them briefly and they all seemed greatly elated. Then I suddenly bethought myself of Belinkiss's nervousness and charged him with it, asking him what had been the cause. He blushed furiously and shifted uneasily in his chair. He did not want to answer. I pressed him. "Waal," he drawled, "Meester Westgarth, I kinda' guess my nerves gotten all on the bum. Y'see thet orfice we was in was the scene of a very pe-cu-liar incident."

"Oh," I said. "And what kind of an incident do you refer to, Bill?" My interest aroused. Belinkiss glanced around the circle of people nervously as if asking permission. Someone said "Go ahead, Bill, let's hear all about it." Bill looked straight in front of him and this is the story he told in short staccato sentences.

"Peters had a friend, a younger man than himself. Rumours of sabotage came to Peters' ears. Inquiries were made and the trouble was traced to the young man. For two days Peters would see no one. On the third he sent for the delinquent to come to his office—the very office we were in this day, Meester Westgarth. A few remarks passed between them.

Peters' hand strayed to a drawer in the desk, the same desk we had seen him seated behind, and reappeared with a revolver in its grasp. . . . A sharp report and Peters, a smoking revolver in his hand, surveyed the lifeless body of the young man."

"Peters dispenses Justice himself then," I said.

"Yeah," said Bill.

"But why should that make you nervous?" I asked.

"Waal, you never know," said Belinkiss, pulling his nose with a characteristic gesture. "You never know!" And he would say no more.

Another of the circle took up the conversation and producing an album asked me "Do you know who Peters really is?" "I have heard rumours," I said, "that he is Peter the Painter. Do you think that is true?"

"Take a look at this photograph," my friend answered.

Opening this album, which I now saw to be full of family portraits and groups, my friend pointed out a group of three persons and indicating the centre one, said, "Look." I stared at it for a few moments. There could be no doubt of the face. True the hair was dark whereas now it was white as snow, but the nose, the contours of the face and the general method of holding the head, the ears, everything. "That is Peters," I said. "I'd bet my last dollar on it."

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"Mr. Westgarth, that is 'Peter the Painter,'" said my friend quietly. "This picture appeared in an English newspaper under that title. Now read the signature on the bottom." I did so. It ran "Jacob Peters." "Now you have met Mrs. Peters?" "Yes," I answered. "Take a good look at the lady in this photo then." I did so; it was Mrs. Peters without a doubt. So this was the mystery of Peters solved at last. A glance at the two photographs of Mrs. Peters convinced me that this was not a fairy tale. One was a photograph of "Peter the Painter," his wife and little girl. The other a photograph of Mrs. Peters as she now is in Moscow.

I never saw Peters again although I heard of him from time to time, but his English wife and their little girl, who has now turned into a very grown-up young lady, were constantly in our company during our stay in Moscow. The conversations we had with her were very interesting. Unfortunately she is still in Moscow.

Peters himself is nowadays like the Elusive Pimpernel. He is rarely seen, and even on May Day, the Great Day in Soviet Russia, he does not parade with the other chiefs of the Union, preferring to go into the country and hunt with his gun and his dogs. He is guarded day and night. His chauffeur is a specially trained man and is always armed. His five trained police dogs watch him day and night. They have special ration cards which enables their caretaker to procure meat in quantity for them, a

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thing which the ordinary worker sees seldom, if at all.

He was reported to have left for the Manchurian border recently. Are we to see another chapter added to his record? Truly his life would read like a wonder tale.

CHAPTER XIII

YESTERDAY'S TERROR AND TO-DAY'S

WHAT precisely is the O.G.P.U.?

That is a question that all persons interested in Russia frequently ask, and the replies they receive are often as misleading as they are varied. Actually, all that is generally known regarding this amazing organisation is that it is a kind of secret police force, operating throughout Russia, and engaged principally in the suppression of counter-revolutionary activities. This is fairly correct, but what is not generally known is that practically every man, woman and child in Russia to-day is an unofficial member of the O.G.P.U.

Immediately after the successful seizure of power in Russia by the Bolshevics, they were forced, by reason of their numerical minority, to build up an effective defence against counter-revolution, and the weapon they chose was "terror." They sought so to fill the populace with fear, that no man would trust his neighbour, and the boldest would hesitate to join in any plot against the new authority. How far this was justified on the grounds of urgency is a debatable point with which I shall not concern myself. Suffice it to say that the "Cheka" took the

place of the "Ochrana" of Tsarist days, and from the Cheka grew the O.G.P.U.

As this book deals primarily with the workings of the Five Year Plan I shall pass lightly over the activities of the O.G.P.U. where they do not actually touch the plan. But do not imagine that their connection with the Plan and its workings is inconsiderable. The Five Year Plan is Communism's great milestone, and its workings have been more effectively guarded than anything else in the Communist code. Any action which can be reasonably or unreasonably construed as designing to hinder the achievement of the plan is "counter-revolution," and that is the charge, more than any other, on which the O.G.P.U. have "liquidated" more people.

On another page you will find a reproduction of a letter received by me, the carefully addressed envelope, and the note of apology for inadvertent opening which accompanied the epistle when it reached me. The note read as follows :—

Mr. Westgarth, Esq.

DEAR SIR,

I am verry sorry of having by inadvertance opened this letter wich was addressed to you. Do belive it was made without any ill design.

Yours faithfully,

Secretary, I. GORLOFF.

The concluding sentence will be noticed. For some reason the writer was most anxious to impress on me the fact that the letter was inadvertently

ГОС. УПРАВЛЕНИЕ ПО ПОСТРОЙКЕ
ТЕЛЫБЕССКОГО МЕТАЛЛУРГИЧЕСКОГО ЗАВОДА
ТЕЛЫБЕССКОЙ
УПРАВЛ. ДЕЛАМИ

Томск.

10 VII 1920 г. N
Mr. Wistgaith, Esq.

Dear Sir,
I am very sorry
of having by inadvan-
tence opened this
letter which was
addressed to you.
Do believe it was
made without any
ill design

Yours
faithfully

Secretary
Goloff!

Example showing opening of private letters

opened. His reason was an excellent one. As I have already said, I was in constant touch with various British firms throughout my stay in Russia, my object being to secure, wherever possible, favourable consideration of British goods and machinery. This was known in certain hostile quarters, and excellent care was taken to see that my correspondence passed into the right hands before reaching me. This had grown to such proportions and my complaints had been so frequently disregarded that I had finally approached the highest possible quarters. Things had gone so far that I had even caught them in the act of photographing my drawings and tracings. I secured the copies and laid strong emphasis on thorough measures being taken to keep such irregularities within check.

A very definite ukase had been issued to the effect that any further interference with my correspondence would be a most serious matter. Yet letters were opened and the specimen I have reproduced is but one of many. So powerful is the O.G.P.U. in Russia that I am almost ready to believe that there is nothing in that country their agents do not know. Most letters addressed to a Russian from abroad are censored, whilst their system of records makes the dossier systems of France and Germany mild in comparison.

Their agents are everywhere. They even asked my son very shortly after our arrival in the U.S.S.R. to become one. This was politely refused. There is no gainsaying the fact that everyone of the Russian

people are unofficial and official agents of the O.G.P.U., and well may I be pardoned for suspecting even the young man in Siberia of being a skilfully disguised agent of the most dreaded secret service in the world.

On my return from Siberia I was met at the station by an official of the O.G.P.U. and, wise from experience, I had no hesitation in telling him what I thought of conditions. I was hoping that this agent would deal with the things I told him in his report, that in this way if in no other those in high places might hear what I had to say. But even though they did learn the evil conditions still remained.

The O.G.P.U. use all types and amongst the interpreters one finds many of their most useful agents. My one and only female interpreter and secretary is worthy of especial mention in this connection. She was an Armenian. I rather sympathise with the Turks. Certainly, many times during her stay with us at the N.K.R.K.I. I found myself wishing that she had been one of her unfortunate country people who had perished at the hands of the galloping Kurds.

This young lady reminded me of Nellie Wallace in full make-up. In the summer she wore old-fashioned, high-heeled, high-laced boots, white stockings, a short pink cotton blouse, a fur coat and a tiny hat with a huge feather. But despite her odd appearance, she was undoubtedly a clever secretary and linguist. I have never yet had a typist who could

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equal her for speed and accuracy, while she spoke five languages fluently. Obviously she had been carefully selected by the Soviet as one of its coming young women, and I did hear that she was a possible Soviet delegate to the League of Nations. In such circumstances, I pity the other delegates, for that young woman was quite capable of starting a war on her own—and winning it.

It was this girl who passed on a casual remark I made at the Moscow works, and which served to bring Voroshilov and Budjenny down shortly after. How many other words of mine caused consternation in high places I shall probably never know. But I am quite certain of the fact that I never mentioned anything within the hearing of this bright young lady which she did not distort and use for some purpose or other.

It is the fixed determination of the Bolsheviks eventually to build up an entirely Russian State, capable of running itself without the aid of a single foreigner. Naturally, they could not start right away on these lines, so it became necessary to employ Britishers, Germans and Americans as technical advisers. The Soviet leaders looked about them for some means of substituting natives for the foreigners—trained by the Capitalists and not true believers in the destiny of the Soviet—and this task they found practically impossible.

At last even the truest believers were convinced that they could never hope to find those qualities essential for the intelligence department of an

industrial civilisation in the Slavonic character. Reluctantly they would give up trying to train their own engineers, while their pupils combined to commit such gross blunders as to make even their patient masters despair of them. But the Soviet would not admit defeat.

"No," went forth the typically Communist ukase. "If we cannot make engineers out of the people we have, then we will make new people." And that is precisely what they began to do.

It was well in keeping with Soviet methods that the sufferers in this particular case should be the particularly hated bourgeois—the non-proletarians without even the right to call their souls their own. Women of the old régime, growing daughters who had known only a few years of luxury and happiness of Tsarist days, were starving, and nobody cared. The Soviet suddenly became most paternal to some of them. These women and girls were brought in, and given a chance of decent living conditions. Few of them had the courage to refuse, and Moscow and Leningrad saw the coming of young women interpreters to their tourist and foreign bureaux.

These girls are required to exercise their wiles on foreign visitors and specialists. The Communists amongst them were informed that it was a point of honour to have an affair with a foreigner, for the ultimate glory of the Revolution.

Although shocking to the Western mind this excursion into experimental biology is extremely interesting. Actually, in Russia such a step loses a

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good deal of its significance, for it is but a minor development of the theory of the Soviet State, in which the unit is not the individual but the whole, the individual merely being a part. The development, however, is particularly significant as a pointer to the status of women in the new Soviet civilisation. Matters which are hedged around with traditions of delicacy and reserve are viewed in Moscow from a severely practical standpoint. Individual prejudices or reservations carry no weight whatever.

The mother may be quite free from responsibility in the upbringing of a child, and the children may be interned in one of the many State institutions of which the Communists are so proud. She may see them at rare intervals. Pro-Communists in all countries dismiss these stories as anti-Soviet propaganda but I would ask them to believe that the State control of children is one of the basic principles of Communism—the State being supreme, what more obvious than that it should be father and mother to the children.

What did give me pause to think was this : Here is a State which to all practical intents and purposes is breeding a race of morons ; what will the products of these unnatural unions prove to be ?

Who can answer such questions. The Soviet loudly proclaims that it is going to build the super-state. It is determined to make itself utterly independent of any other state on earth. *It is even going to make its own people.*

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It would be particularly interesting to remember these last few paragraphs in taking an impartial and independent view of the New Russia. It is my contention that man cannot fight Nature in these matters, and that it is Nature, human and otherwise, which will inevitably defeat the cherished plans of those who are controlling Russia to-day. Nature has defeated such "experiments" before, and I know she cannot fail to do so again.

CHAPTER XIV

GENTLE PERSUASION

OF the many strange stories told me by my interpreter Nicolai, one stands out with vividness and gives an excellent example of Soviet methods.

I have already spoken of the Soviet's ruthless manner of expropriating their countrymen's property in their eagerness to procure as much foreign money as possible. Here is a case in which the victim was an old man who had been wealthy in pre-Revolutionary days and a large dealer in the meat trade.

It was said that this person had, over a period of years before the Revolution and before the Great War, received privileges in cost for transport of his meat by rail and steamer.

Secondly, through private information received from U.S.A., this man had accumulated money in American banks in connection with his business. Since the Revolution these dollars had remained untouched by him.

After a Soviet meeting he was quietly visited by the agents of the O.G.P.U. at his home in Leningrad where he and his wife lived peacefully on the very

meagre rations allowed by the Soviets to the bourgeoisie of old days.

There was no bluster or threats about the first talks. All that was required was that he would "be patriotic" to the Soviets and write them a letter so that some of his dollars could be appropriated at the American bank.

The old man refused either to acknowledge that he had money in America or to do anything about the matter. They then brought him proof that he had money in U.S.A., even naming the bankers.

During their second visit threats were used that unless he would consent to write a letter passing over the money to them he would be sent to Kem-Solovsky.

In order that he and his wife would not be parted, he wrote the letter as dictated. Some days later he was transported to Kem-Solovsky in spite of the promise that if he signed he would not be parted from his wife, and sent to exile.

The American bankers refused to acknowledge the letter, stating that in their belief it had been obtained under duress. So what did the Soviet do to get the old man's money?

They at once set to work with the old man in exile and told him that unless he wrote another letter stating that he was not under duress or in exile, more punishment would be meted out to him. He refused point-blank.

They left him for a few months to suffer and again came pleading on behalf of the Soviets and

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told him that they would send him back to Lenin-grad to his home and wife. After some delay they transported him home. They were in need of money.

Arriving there he was given the best of conditions and good food, and when he was nicely settled they approached him again regarding the letter and the money.

In his joy at the good treatment and the comfort they had given him he thought surely it was not worth while to refrain from doing what they wished, particularly as he was old, and he felt that it was impossible for him ever to get out of the country again.

If he did what he could, they told him, it would be to his advantage and he and his wife could live in comparative comfort. He wrote that letter at their dictation, stating that he was not in exile and not under duress, that no restraint was placed upon him and that the money could be transferred as he was quite happy.

The trick was completed. The Soviets got their cash. The old man was returned to Kem-Solovsky and there remains . . . alone !

Another type of trick played on the people was revealed to me by two prominent members of the Comintern whilst I was in Moscow on a visit. When things get desperate and disorganisation is rampant, the authorities allow the peasants and others to start "private" trading—deliberately telling the people they may do so. First this is a temporary

palliative to stave off revolution. Secondly these dealers in produce or individual dealers in foodstuffs, clothing or boots are tabulated by the O.G.P.U. agents and their profits are indexed by the same spies.

Immediately things are quieter and the uneasiness alleviated these people are either forced into the "Collectives" under threats or, as people like Mr. Shaw like to put it, they are "liquidated."

These are just two examples from many other pleasant Communist tricks of which I learned during my stay in Russia. How do our Communist intelligentsia like them?

The following is an example of how they treat unwary foreigners :

Sitting in my study in our flat in Leningrad one morning, this being my rest day, I was surprised by a visit from two engineers—one an American, the other a German. They were both under contract to a certain Trust in Leningrad. The story they told was typical of others I have heard. In short, they had been sent to me by other American engineers who thought I could tell them where to go to get their grievances put right. It appeared that the German was on contract as the chief engineer for the Trust and his contract called for properly furnished apartments for himself and his wife. He was given a one-roomed shanty at the end of the factory and his furniture, which had been specially shipped from Germany by freight-car had been missing for a month. When finally it did arrive

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there was no place to put it except the warehouse. The van had to be returned, but he was notified from Germany that it did not arrive for three months and that incidentally it had taken the wrong turning and had gone part of the way to Siberia. It had been traced after inquiries and put on the right track for home. He told me the cost for that van was more than all the other expenses for himself and his wife.

He stated that the whole organisation was disrupted in his factory and that although he was a highly educated man, his advice was never taken or adopted and he had no real home life. What was he to do and to whom could he appeal?

Then the American, his chief mechanic, was in a much worse plight. This man had a contract signed in U.S.A., where the Soviet emissaries had told him that everything would be "fine and dandy" in Russia. Good housing conditions suitable for his five children, his wife and himself were stipulated in the contract, and he had been told to take his motor-car and whatever furniture he needed or desired, to Russia.

Four winter months his furniture and his car had stood in all weathers in the open at the Leningrad Docks and he and his family were put into one room in the Hotel Europa, where they stayed until his visit to me that morning. Further he complained the Soviet officials went so far as to threaten him, and when he came to me they had even stopped paying him his salary. That morning he was nearly

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without funds, and his furniture and car were about ruined through exposure. What could he do?

I told these engineers something of my own earlier experiences and gave them the names of two or three officials in Moscow. I also suggested that they should make a call at the N.K.R.K.I.

The American insisted that he would not stay in Russia, for which one could not blame him, for the States had no diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. The last I heard of him was that he and his family had returned to the U.S.A., after an experience which he told me he would never forget.

What became of the German friend I have not heard. They both went to Moscow together and as I look at their visiting cards I can only visualise two cultured and refined gentlemen who had been willing to give of their best but had been duped by those in charge in Russia as well as by their agents in Germany and America.

CHAPTER XV

THE ENGLISH REBEL

FRED JACKSON was once a strong admirer of George Lansbury, the present leader of His Majesty's Opposition. Jackson was a working man, born in Hull, and in his younger days was consumed by that zeal to do something for his fellow men which is the hall mark of many ardent and very sincere Communists. In his early youth, Jackson's humanitarian feelings found outlet in evangelical circles, but politics claimed him, and he became an extreme member of the Labour Party. His wandering feet took him eventually to Russia, after he had experienced many corners of the Capitalist globe, and found no place where he was content to stay.

The outbreak of the Great War found him a confirmed pacifist. He had two sons, and so determined was he that they should not be conscripted that he made desperate efforts to escape with them to America. He approached many well-known people with pacifist views who could do nothing for him, but eventually the veteran Communist, Tom Mann, arranged things in some mysterious manner and all three secured admission to the United States of America.

I have referred to Jackson as a sincere man, and I would stress that point here. While in America he and his sons had many opportunities, and, being hard workers, they prospered. His wife remained in Hull, and during the whole time the men were employed in the States they contributed to her support regularly. Then the United States declared war and introduced conscription, on which Jackson and his sons stood by their principles, threw up their jobs and became common tramps. The War ended, and the Jacksons returned to their employment. They tried to persuade their mother to go to America to join them, but she refused. The result was that the elder son remained in America while the younger returned to England with his father.

Jackson found post-War England little to his liking, and soon began to take a keen interest in Russia. Like so many of his kind, he conceived a glorious land of freedom and became obsessed with the idea that he must reach Russia somehow or other and settle there for the remainder of his days. Others have felt the same urge, but like the young man in Siberia, they have repented of the delusion which took them to Russian shores.

At last Jackson determined to stow away on a Russian steamer leaving Hull early in 1921. Apparently one of the officers connived at this, for when they passed the Kiel Canal Jackson was allowed on deck and fraternised freely with the officers and crew. But all fraternal feeling disappeared when the ship arrived in Leningrad, where a crowd of

O.G.P.U. men came aboard and Jackson was very promptly arrested.

In vain did he protest that his sole object in coming to Russia was to join his happy comrades. No notice was taken of his entreaties and his introduction to the New Russia was a filthy prison.

Jackson was flung into a damp, dark cell which he shared with nineteen others. Most of his fellow-prisoners were priests, for the persecution of the clergy had just started and many priests remaining in Russia were arrested and flung into prison on some pretext or other. The prisoners were given no exercise and their food was revolting. The morning meal consisted of black bread, which lasted the inmates until midday, when an evil-looking soup was served. Fred Jackson gave me a vivid description of this revolting mess. It appeared to be made of grass and to add nourishment fish heads were added. For a time the spectacle of the fish eyes floating about in the thin mess turned Jackson right off his food. In the meantime, however, his companions in misfortune showed themselves only too anxious to relieve him of his ration, and eventually Jackson was forced by hunger to accept the diet. Poor fellow! A long subsequent experience of Russia under Communism convinced him that England was not so bad after all.

Probably the fact that Russia wanted no trouble with Britain saved Jackson's life. Executions were frequent during his stay in prison, and time and again when the guards visited his cell he thought

his time had come. Occasionally a batch of prisoners was taken away—never to return—probably shot, so he thought.

Jackson escaped this fate and was transferred to Moscow to be interrogated by the chiefs of the O.G.P.U. They appeared to think he was a British spy and many questions were asked him with a view to making him admit something that could be used as evidence in support of this suspicion. However, Jackson knew MacManus, a British Communist then in Moscow, who vouched for him and secured his release.

But release meant only the cold, dirty streets instead of the revolting prison. Jackson found himself free, but with no opportunity of earning a living. He was already beginning to perceive that the promised land was not all he had imagined it would be.

Starving, with no chance of work, no prospect of returning to the land he had forsaken, Jackson wended his way to the British Consulate where he saw a young vice-Consul and explained his position. When he had finished the official nodded.

"Come with me," he said, "I'll find you a home."

He took the hungry man in his car, gave him a few roubles, and deposited him at the entrance of one of the most remarkable places in Russia. The Hotel Lux, the hostel where foreign "comrades" are entertained during their stay in Moscow. The place was filled with agitators from every part of the world, come to learn the latest tricks of strike

making from the Bolshevic masters. Used as he was to "Tough Joints," as he put it, in many parts of the world, Jackson saw many things he very emphatically did not like, and as he had the temerity to say what he thought he begat few friends.

However, Jackson had made his bed and was man and philosopher enough to lie on it without complaint. Someone in the Lux took an interest in him, and with the aid of this man and his friend MacManus, he was found work as a compositor on *Pravda*. Then, after a time, he was sent for and informed that he was to be printer to Trotsky, at that time the idol of Russia. Jackson had by this time managed to get a pretty good grasp of the language and he told me he found Trotsky a very agreeable and brilliant personality.

Becoming a member of the Russian Communist Party, Jackson had the usual privileges. He soon had money, but little to do with it, and as time went on he found himself revolting against the drab life of modern Russia. Then Trotsky fell foul of the Party, and his exit became imminent.

During the whole time the Russian leader's career hung in the balance, and while contumely was being poured upon him by every section of the Party, Jackson still remained his ardent follower. A strange point which Jackson makes regarding Trotsky's exile is the fact that Trotsky was still beloved at the time of his downfall and expulsion from the Communist Party. Although only derogatory reports of his conduct were published in the

Press, the people still idolised Trotsky, and this was probably the reason why his enemies in the Party dared not exterminate him.

When eventually the founder of the Red Army was ordered out of Russia, riots broke out everywhere and were suppressed only after much difficulty. Three lots of engineers refused to drive the train which was to take him away, and finally it had to be taken over by officers of the O.G.P.U. Many people flung themselves on the rails in the path of the exile's train, but they were removed. It was months before the agitation in favour of Trotsky died down, but meanwhile Stalin, and his present lieutenant, Molotov, consolidated themselves in power.

Despite his popularity with the people—the nominal rulers of Russia—Trotsky was exiled. The *party* had spoken.

Trotsky had been extremely anxious to establish trade relations with Great Britain, and Jackson told me :—" If you had been here in his day, things would have been very much different for you."

Jackson added that Lenin always trusted Trotsky, believing him to be above corruption. He told me that when Lenin was alive he managed to hold the Party together, but his death was the signal for a savage scramble for power. Even in those days, when Stalin was a minor figure in Communist councils, Lenin had been concerned about him and had once remarked that Stalin and Trotsky must become reconciled or there would be great trouble.

After Trotsky's departure, Jackson was ordered



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to the staff of the *Workers' Gazette*, one of the important newspapers in Moscow. He was also appointed Inspector of Printing Works in Moscow, but only after an exhaustive investigation had convinced the Party that he was not in communication with Trotsky.

Jackson went about his work thoroughly, and found the most appalling waste going on in practically every printing house in Moscow. He took the matter up, direct to the Chief Committee of the Communist Party. As a Communist, of course, he had this right. Despite my official status in the U.S.S.R. it would have been impossible for me to have taken similar action with regard to the waste and mismanagement which I exposed in connection with the steel industry.

The committee took action and found that thousands of dollars' worth of machinery, all comparatively new, was not being utilised and had lain idle in some cases for years. Meantime the journals *Pravda* and *Izvestia* were being printed in the old style although men and machinery were available to treble the production of both journals. But if Jackson expected to be rewarded—even with gratitude—for his work, he was disappointed. He only made enemies within the Party, and was the victim of treachery thereafter.

I met Jackson within a few days of my arrival in the U.S.S.R. the second time. He came to my rooms at the hotel in Moscow, and at the first seemed rather timid. When he saw that I was well disposed

towards him, however, his attitude changed and he told me how glad he was to see and talk with an Englishman. I invited him to stay and we talked for a long time, during which he told me much of what is recorded here.

"You'll find it difficult here," he told me frankly. "They do things different from what we do, but just watch yourself. I know you will be exasperated by them, but remember they are the masters here."

Towards the end of our talk he seemed very puzzled and finally admitted: "The trouble here is that they won't let a man do his job, always there is someone chasing after you—generally someone who doesn't know the first thing about the business, and usually they manage to spoil all a good workman does.

"Then," he went on, "There's the system of transferring a man from one job to another. He may be a perfectly good and useful man, until someone comes along and decides that he ought to be in some other post in another city. Sometimes his place is filled, sometimes it isn't. They don't appreciate the first thing about organisation in this country. Except on paper," he added.

After dinner some other English-speaking visitors arrived. I have thought Russians a very sociable lot—Jackson was friendly enough with the majority of them, but all the time he seemed to watch them with a hunted look—of one who is not quite certain whether to expect a pat or a blow. The conversation continued in general channels for a while, and then

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music was suggested. The gramophone, yes. The portable machine and records were brought out. Jazz, some noisy overtures and comic songs were the order. But before going the old Communist, strange to say, desired nothing better than an old-fashioned hymn tune. He sat in the shadows behind others and I noticed him having a fight with his emotions. The music stopped—there was silence—and I noticed a few tears—his grey head was bowed. “Good night, Mr. Westgarth, and all the best to you,” was his last remark that night.

CHAPTER XVI

FOOD AND THE FOREIGNER

BEFORE the decision to go ahead with the Five Year Plan, food was scarce in Russia, but it was more plentiful than at any other time since the Revolution. The terrible famine which followed the establishment of the Bolshevist régime is now ancient history, but immediately it passed, steps were taken to conserve existing food supplies. This measure was in great part the responsibility of Trotsky, who carried out suggestions made by Lenin himself to hoard food supplies against a similar famine. In the meantime, the New Economic Policy came into force, and for a time the people were moderately well off.

Russia was doing little or no trade with the outside world, and consequently foreign luxuries were not available. The best that people could procure were supplies brought in by peasants, to whom Lenin had, under N.E.P., restored a measure of freedom. Collectivisation was done away with, and production for profit, on a greatly reduced scale, was permitted.

Stalin's autocratic decision to go ahead with the Plan upset all Lenin's careful preparations made during the last days of his lifetime for the recon-

struction of the Soviet on an economic basis. In future, all production must primarily be for foreign markets, and only that which could not be sold abroad or was absolutely essential at home was for local consumption. The latter clause gave very wide powers to the authorities. Nothing apparently was "essential" if there was any chance of selling it abroad.

I have already described the conditions in the Kuzneitsk District and the fate of the secretary and the field engineer. All over Russia similar scenes were being enacted. The workers would not perform their jobs unless they were fed. Their rations were meagre enough, but when their due was not available, even the downtrodden workers found the stomach to revolt. In some cases more extreme measures than in Siberia were taken.

One snowy night not long after my trip with the commission to the Urals, I was returning to my flat in the Nevsky Prospect, when I became aware of a number of people—about twenty or thirty—standing in front of a shop near my apartment. I wondered for a moment what they wanted there, so late at night, but passing on soon forgot all about it. Next morning when I left my flat to go to my office, shortly after nine o'clock, I found the Prospect literally packed with people, a surging, milling crowd.

Men and women pushing wildly to get a position in the queue which was making an attempt to form itself outside the shop. So dense was the crowd that a militiaman (police officer) had to clear a way

through for me to pass. He did so none too gently and as I reached the outskirts of the crowd I became aware of loud shouts from behind. Next moment they had scattered in all directions—as three mounted police pushed through their ranks, sending them running to right and left away from the flying hooves of the horses.

For the next half-hour the crowd was being marshalled into line by more hastily summoned police. I dropped into the store later and asked my interpreter to find out what the row had been about. I was informed that the store had been given permission to sell 300 men's vests, 300 undergarments and 50 pairs of boots. In accordance with instructions they had to display a notice to this effect during the day previous to the sale. That was what the anxious crowd had been waiting for since the previous night.

Comfort depends on purchasing power, and the purchasing power of the Russian workman is practically nil. He might, if he is fortunate enough to get special permission, be able to buy foreign goods from the specialist's stores, but even if he did so, prices would be prohibitive. To prove this, I cannot do better than quote the schedules of special duty on foreign goods payable by visiting specialists.

When Russia sent abroad for those brains necessary and essential to the success of the Five Year Plan, which she could not find in the U.S.S.R., the Soviet knew that some allowance must be made to the foreign specialists who took up residence in

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Russia. To enable them to live up to a decent standard, they were permitted to receive parcels from abroad, subject to a low (for Russia) rate of duty. In every case, actual duty payable by a Russian would have made the goods prohibitive, and the contents of the parcels would have gone to the Government. Below, I reproduce in full detail, the circular sent to all foreign specialists :—

CIRCULAR OF THE CHIEF COMMISSARIAT OF NATIONAL
ECONOMY OF U.S.S.R. NO. 62. MOSCOW, JULY 23RD, 1930

In order to guarantee the necessary living conditions of accommodation of foreign specialists, on work in U.S.S.R. and members of their families living together with them, the Government Institutions have granted to these specialists the right to obtain food from abroad, packages with articles, enumerated below, for the personal use of these foreign specialists and members of their families living with them at a reduced payment of customs duty.

Attached hereto are rules regulating this privileged entry of the above packages from abroad, issued by the People's Commissariat of Trade and Commerce with the VSNH of U.S.S.R. and of the People's Commissariat of Finance ; VSNH of U.S.S.R. appoints as a guidance and for the execution of the following :—

1. For articles indicated in the rules the following custom duty is fixed :—

<i>a</i>	Conserves		Rs. 1 per klg.
<i>b</i>	Coffee, cocoa		„ 5 „ „
<i>c</i>	Candy, chocolate, cakes		„ 2 „ „
<i>d</i>	Butter, sausage, ham, sausage products		„ 1 „ „
<i>e</i>	Sugar		30 kps. „ „
<i>f</i>	Tobacco, tobacco products		Rs. 10 „ „

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<i>i</i>	Soap (ordinary).	.	.	.	Free of duty
<i>j</i>	Ladies' and gentlemen's shoes	.	.	.	Rs.10 per pr.
<i>k</i>	Children's shoes	.	.	.	" 5 " "
<i>l</i>	Clothes, linen	.	.	.	"20 " klg.
<i>m</i>	Hosiery, except socks and stockings	.	.	.	"25 " "
<i>n</i>	Socks and stockings	.	.	.	"50 " "

2. The reduced custom duties are only to be introduced from I/IV of this year and to be extended on packages which have entered from abroad to U.S.S.R. to the address of foreign specialists after April of this year, and have not actually been obtained by foreign specialists.

3. To immediately inform the foreign specialists on work in the Industrial Organisation of the privilege granted them and to draw their attention at the same time to the fact that articles received by them from abroad under those privileges can be used by them exclusively for their personal need and for the use of members of their families living together with them.

RULES

of a privileged entry of foreign mail parcels for personal use of foreign specialists working in U.S.S.R.

I. Foreign specialists on work in U.S.S.R. have the right to obtain from abroad in mail parcels for their personal use, and for the personal use of members of their families living together with them, at specially appointed reduced customs taxes the following articles below in enumerated quantities for *each person*.

EACH PERSON :—

Various conserves, not over	10 boxes per month
Coffee	500 grms. " "
Cocoa	500 " " "

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Pastry	2	kg.	per month
Chocolates and candy	1	„	„ „
Sugar	2	„	„ „
Butter, sausage and ham, not over	3	„	„ „
Soap	3	„	„ „
Tobacco and tobacco pro- ducts	500	grms.	„ „
Linen	6	units	„ year
Clothes	1	unit	„ „
Hosiery	1	„	„ „
Socks and Stockings	6	pairs	„ „
Shoes	2	„	„ „

- II. The quantity of parcels allowed to entry, subject to those rules, cannot be over 2 per month for each person.
- III. The mail parcel subject to these rules is to follow from abroad to the addressee, the foreign specialist, accompanied by a certificate of the institution or enterprise where the specialists are on work, and this certificate has to contain an indication that the addressee of the parcel is a foreign specialist and that together with him so and so members of his family are living in U.S.S.R.
- IV. Institutions or enterprises issuing a certificate indicated in point 3, keep a record of articles received by the addressee and watch that these articles should be passed only within the limits indicated in Point 1, and that the quantity should not exceed the number indicated in Point 2.
- V. All articles from abroad obtained by foreign specialists by virtue of the present may be used by them exclusively for their need and for the need of the members of their families living together with them in the U.S.S.R.

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To sell without proper permission the articles passed under privilege the addressee is liable to a penalty for smuggling.

P.P. Chief of the Custom House Department.
(STAHL) Signature. . . . Responsible executive
on operation questions for a true copy.

4. Certificates introduced by these rules of privilege have to be filled in according to the form enclosed.

5. The issue of these certificates is subject to those Organisations, Institutions and Enterprises in which Foreign Specialists are actually on work.

6. Industrial Organisations, Institutions and Enterprises indicated in Point 5 are to keep a careful record of certificates issued by them and not admit excesses.

A. Of the fixed quantity of packages (not above two packages per month for each foreign specialist and member of his family) and

B. Of the limits determined for these packages.

7. The central Institutions are to concentrate the issue of certificates and a record of parcels and articles enclosed in them. In departments organised in conformity with Point 1 of the Prikaz of VSNH/U.S.S.R. of 6/V No. 113/c and all other Industrial Institutions (Trusts, Works, Mills, Plants, etc.), are to transfer this work to those of their departments to which foreign specialists are attached.

8. The responsibility for the correct issue of certificates is imposed in central organisations, on executives appointed according to Point 2 of the above Prikaz, and in other Industrial Institutions on Supervisors of these Institutions or their assistants.

9. One copy of each certificate is delivered to the foreign specialist for sending abroad and attaching it to the parcel mailed to the U.S.S.R. for this specialist ; the second copy

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remains in the individual file of the foreign specialist (in the Institution).

10. The right to obtain parcels from abroad is granted to specialists and operators assigned for contract, as well as for temporary work (working on individual contracts, on consulting work and expert work, delivering reports and lectures, assembling equipment and instructing our personnel by appointment of foreign manufacturing firms) for a period of not less than two months, and also for foreign specialists to obtain parcels from abroad, and operators on work in industrial organisations on a basis of such contracts for technical assistance in which the privilege for these foreign specialists has not been stated in that contract.

11. In cases where contracts for technical assistance with foreign firms involve the right of foreign specialists to obtain parcels from abroad under privilege, the question of extending privileges by the present circular on those specialists is decided by the sector of foreign policy of VSNH of U.S.S.R. in respect to each individual contract for technical assistance separately by request of the respective Organisations.

12. The parcels have to be destined exclusively to the address of the foreign specialist indicated in Point 10.

13. By virtue of privileges described in the present circular to measures organising the supply of foreign specialists inside the country. You are invited to decline any requests of foreign specialists either of rising their payments (by increasing their salary, through entire or partial exemption of taxes or expenses for living accommodation, etc.), or of increasing the amount of foreign valuta, stipulated by the contract, and not to accept any obligation in that respect toward foreign specialists, without preliminary consent of the foreign policy of VSNH of U.S.S.R.

The VSNH of the Union Republics are to distribute this

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circular to their subordinate organisations of the Republic and district Industry.

Enclosure :—Rules and Form of Certificate.

P.P. President of VSNH of U.S.S.R., A. DOGADOV.

Manager of Affairs for VSNH of U.S.S.R.,
A. KOLESNIKOV.

COPY

application to Circular No. 62 of 23/VII/1930.

By agreement with NKF (People's Commissariat of Finance U.S.S.R.)

Confirmed. P.P. People's Commissariat of Trade of U.S.S.R.

12/VII/1930.

L. HINT K.

APPLICATION to the Circular No. 62.

pf. 23/VII/1930

Stamp

of the Organisation
or Enterprise.

CERTIFICATE

(Name of the Organisation)..... by the present confirms that Mr..... in the capacity and that according to the rules of NKF of 1930, Mr..... has the privilege to receive parcels from abroad under reduced customs duty taxes consisting of the following articles.

Names of the Articles

Quantity

1.

2.

3.

4.

The parcel has to proceed to the name of Mr. John R. Westgarth to 15th OCTOBER PROSPECT, 67 APARTMENT THREE, LENINGRAD, U.S.S.R.

Signature (according to Circular), Stamp.

From this schedule it is perfectly clear and obvious that the Russian workman is deprived of every necessity of life. If foreign specialists must receive special permission to import food and clothing, and it is found necessary to grant him a special reduction of duty, it is obvious that the Soviet is carefully controlling not only its own resources, but those of the people. Take for example the one item, Butter. During the past two years Russia has exported enormous quantities of butter to European countries, where it has been sold at rates so low that they do not permit competition. Butter is a luxury, practically unobtainable, throughout the U.S.S.R. and all the time I was there the people were continually complaining of the lack of such an essential.

What can one think of a country where it is necessary to receive special permission to get parcels from abroad? Admittedly duty is payable in most countries on articles imported, even in small quantities, but I do not think that anywhere are items of food and clothing prohibited from entering.

Some time ago the Soviet encouraged the people to ask their friends abroad to send them food and clothing. Many took advantage of this, but when the goods arrived found that they could not meet the customs demand and so the goods had to go to the State. The parcels were simply passed over to those able to pay; in some cases, of course, foreigners or tourists bought. The result being, of course, a profit to the State.

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Foreign currency is the objective in view all the time and Soviet products are preserved to the very last degree for export. Russia cannot afford to sacrifice a single shilling of foreign currency or one single ounce of local produce. Everything was needed and conscripted for the glorious Plan.

CHAPTER XVII

IN THE TEMPLES OF BOLSHEVISM

COMMUNISM is just another religion . . . Moscow its Mecca. . . . The dream of all devotees is at some time or other during their lives to visit Moscow.

Soon after the Revolution one of the zealots, full of faith and fervour, decided he would go on his pilgrimage. It proved to be a life sentence for him . . . for he went there to work.

But there is another side to Communism in Russia.

This centres in the Lux Hotel, the "nest" of all foreign Communists, and on a smaller scale the Bristol Hotel. Here the visiting pupils and disciples of Karl Marx learn how to hatch his particular kind of mischief and they are sent home to do their stuff when and where they can.

Let us glance at their communal life, in the Lux and the Bristol. First of all one must cast aside all ideas of East is East and West is West. The twain do meet here. The colony consists of black, white, yellow, red, and brown. Discontents one and all . . . all intermingle one with the other. There must be at least a thousand of these dissenters living

within the confines of this Holy of Holies. A section always changing, coming and going, like the seasons of the year.

Few non-Communists are ever allowed inside the doors and we have to thank someone who stayed with us during our sojourn in Moscow for entrance to the Lux.

Entrance is not for any. Oh no! You have to know who you wish to see first, and they are rung up on the phone to confirm it. Then your passport is taken from you and you are given a "Propusk,"* which has to be signed by the one you have visited before you are given back your passport. You climb up to whatever floor your "friend" lives. On the first floor you will see a restaurant of sorts, more like a quick-lunch counter than anything else. They have a German chef to cook for them what little food there is, for true Communists survive on the minimum, partly because of their religion, mostly because they cannot get any more.

Through dark and none too clean corridors you wander, the stench of boiled cabbage and other sweet smells following you to the farthest extent of the building.

Dark figures flit past you silently, no one speaks, you are a stranger. There is something eerie and deadening about the atmosphere in this one-time hotel and you are left to your own initiative to find your way about . . . which is no easy matter.

Space is measured, the inmates receive one room

* Permit.

to live and sleep in, they pay a small sum as rental and extra for their light and heat and food . . . there are, of course, many grades. Strange, is it not, that this should be so in the very centre of Communism?

Now let us take a glance at these people and see what they do in their spare time. It is about nine o'clock at night. First we enter a small dark room, sixteen feet by twelve feet; the walls and every available space are taken up with books. It is the room of a young British Communist student and his wife. By the light of the solitary lamp the young man is striving to turn out an article. We do not even have to look at its text to know what its contents are—propaganda!

His wife, who cannot speak English, strives vainly to still the lusty crying of their three-month-old baby. The girl, for she is not very old, is a sweet young thing, just as he is a nice but misguided young man . . . they are a nice couple . . . but all one can get out of them in the way of talk is of the latest strike news from England. Not much family joy here . . . we leave soon.

Our next stop a room in the basement. The room itself is bare of any furniture save a huge grand piano and a divan on which to sleep. Here two women with strained and much-painted faces eat walnuts and gossip over the latest scandal in their colony. We are welcome . . . we are given walnuts and are asked to tell a shady story, they are interested in nothing else, so we leave them for other realms.

Ascending the stairway again someone who knows us asks us to a "celebration," or, as they liked to put it, a "do." The door opens and the blare of a portable gramophone greets us, intermingling with the babble of many voices. There are at least ten people in the room . . . mostly drunk . . . bottles are strewn over the floor broadcast. We are introduced to the folks we have not met before . . . a tall Indian student is pushed forward dragging a young Russian girl after him who looks more dead than alive. He gasps out "Theesh ish ma leetle lamb, d'you like 'er? Sheesh goo girlsh . . . yes shir!" and he collapses into the mass of humanity behind, all in much the same state as himself.

We move along and our next visit brings us into contact with a group of Americans. One of them has a demoniacal expression, fresh from strikes and other such conquests in America.

The conversation moves through various channels and grisly incidents connected with himself as the central figure. Someone asks him his mode of defence. He stands up amidst the admiring eyes of the group, a quick movement and a little stiletto gleams evilly in the palm of his hand. He moves a few feet from the closed door . . . he is going to demonstrate. Flick! The knife sticks quivering in the panel . . . he chuckles quietly . . . walk forward and pulls it out. And so we go on again.

Family life? Gone, vanished like chaff before the Red wind.

Their daily occupations are in most cases learning

IN THE TEMPLES OF BOLSHEVISM

Marxist dogmas ; after a period they return to their native countries if they can . . . and create trouble until they are put in prison or literally thrown out again, when they return . . . if they can . . . to the source of their undoing. We must leave them, for theirs is not a constructive or a happy life.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE MAN WHO KILLED THE TSAR

MAY, the daughter of Mrs. Peters, had written to us some time previously asking if she might come to Leningrad and stay with us for a while—she was the daughter of the famous Peters of the O.G.P.U. and the N.K.R.K.I.

My wife and I had talked it over and decided to have her spend a few weeks with us—she was a pleasant girl, spoke good English, and was a member of the school founded by Isadora Duncan in Russia.

She arrived on the day I decided to accept Zaviniakin's offer to go to Moscow. That night the front door-bell of our apartment rang and a rather distinguished man with a small black beard entered and great expressions of joy could be heard in the hallway. He had called to see May, the daughter of his friend Jacob Peters, and she had answered the door—hence the fuss.

After a few moments of excited talk in Russian May called out "Mr. and Mrs. Westgarth, this is Commissar Matvieff." A firm hand grasped mine in hearty handshake—brown eyes scrutinised me keenly. "Goot-evenin'," he boomed out in broken

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English and bent in a stiff old-fashioned bow with a military click of heel upon heel.

Matvieff? I wondered dimly where I had heard that name before, while I relieved him of his ponderous overcoat, disclosing a neat figure clad in a smart foreign suit on the breast of which reposed three Lenin orders—three brilliant spots of red and silver which glistened in the lamplight. Entering the dining-room he sank into a chair.

We talked generalities for a little while, and then he glanced around the room with appraising eyes.

“Ah, how comfortable! You English have the knack—comfort, solid and reliable.” The latter remark accompanied a keen glance in my direction.

“And you try to bring British things to Russia. Yes? Vot Horoshi [that is good]. Solid and reliable. . . .” His voice tailed off.

“I am leaving Russia,” I answered, somewhat tersely.

He tilted his head. . . . “So.” A pair of well-kept hands clasped over his stomach came to life, and played idly with his waistcoat buttons, he pursed his lips together and his eyes dropped, staring at the pattern on the carpet.

I instinctively sensed this visit not to be without purpose, especially from a friend of the notorious Peters, probably an overture of some kind; that they wanted me to stay in the U.S.S.R. I was fully aware. They had an idea I possessed a little too much information of their inside workings and international intrigues to pass from their ken in

an unfriendly mood. I decided to bait the man and fathom the business to the bottom. His cigarette-case appeared and offerings over, he lit up and inhaled deeply.

"Why do you leave Russia?" he asked.

"For the very reason you have already mentioned," I answered. "Russia does not want British men or their products. British money—yes, to buy American machinery. There is no fair competition. Bribery is rife, and corruption rampant. Fair business is unknown here. That is why I am leaving."

He smiled a little, surveying the opposite wall with interest, his clasped hands in repose came to life again and the thumbs revolved.

"I know something of your career in Russia. Perhaps you will tell me a little more. I am very interested," he commented. "I know you have been at the State Planning Institute and I have been wanting to meet you for some time. They wanted me to take Zaviniakin's place, but I did not think the work important enough for me. Now what are they doing with you?"

At that I laughed and launched into a description of my work since I arrived in Russia. For two hours he listened with increasing interest. Brows raised, eyes open wide with astonishment. It was obviously not the same tale he had heard before. At last it was over and I saw that the effect was successful. Matvieff's full-lipped mouth tightened together in an angry snarl, his features set, hard as granite and

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he became the typical Soviet official at his post. He suddenly realised we awaited comment. The set look vanished instantly, two rows of perfect teeth were displayed for our appreciation.

"Pah!" he exclaimed. "It is too bad"—then dramatically—"I will see all put right. I will write to my friends in Moscow. I want you to see Orjonikidze [the head of the VSNH* at that time]. Have you seen him yet?"

"No," I replied.

"Then you shall. You must not leave my country in this discontented state. No!" He thumped the arm of the chair with doubled fist, then suddenly relaxing, murmured, "Do not worry, my friend. I will see to it." His eyes twinkled. "Now let us talk not of business but as human beings, as friends——"

"And," I interposed, "We will drink also."

"Ho, ho," he laughed, "You are a good Russian as well as a patriotic Englishman, a rare combination."

I produced cognac and glasses. His first glass vanished instantly and was followed by another. As the fiery liquid rolled into him the perspiration rolled out and words rolled out also. The more wine that went in the more words came out, more, in fact, than I expected. And more than he expected, for on reaching the stage of semi-intoxication that sends memory coursing with fearful wings into the past, a phantom came to life again, his eyes suddenly glazed over with horror. A little incident completed

*Supreme Council of National Economy.

the circuit that set the wheels of suggestion in motion. His nervous fingers, idly straying from knee to coat pocket, encountered and grasped a pipe. Something in the shape, the feel, brought it to life—that vivid picture of horror. Involuntarily he started in his chair, glancing furtively from side to side. We watched him, fascinated, wondering what was coming next. I got the shock of my life at his next few words.

"I did it!" he gasped. "I did it," and he drew a shaking hand across his brow as if to blot out an unpleasant scene.

"What did you do? Are you quite well?" I asked, thinking perhaps the man felt ill.

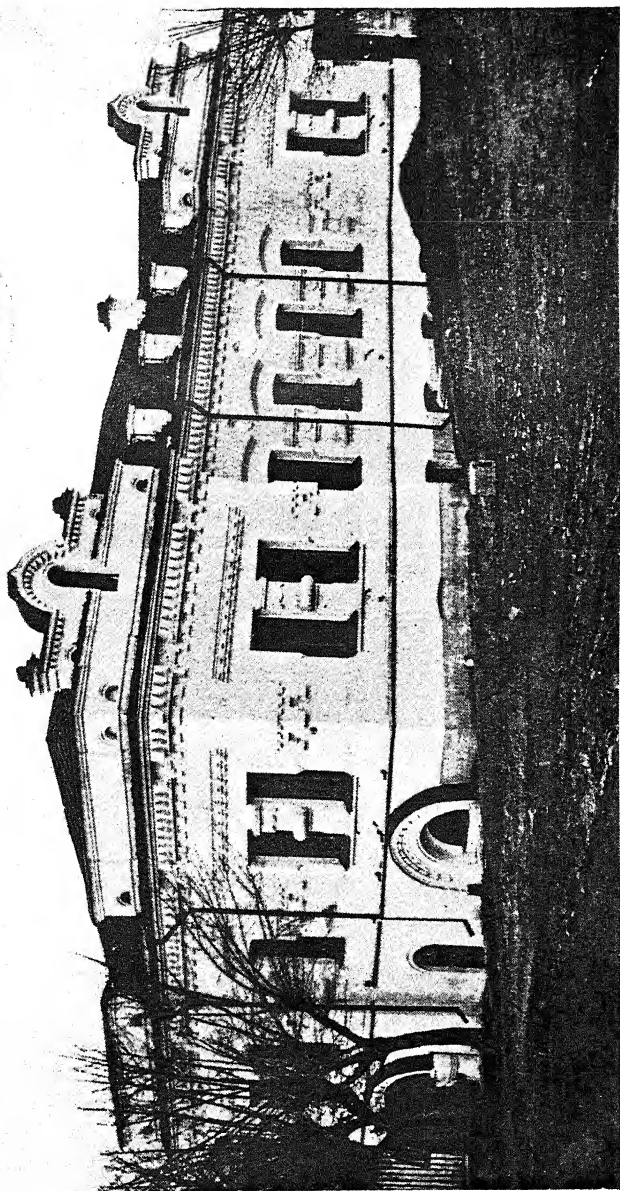
He laughed drunkenly. "I did it!" he cried.

"You did what?" I said, a little exasperated.

"Niki . . . I shot him . . . his family." The pipe appeared in his hand and he went through a series of almost childish motions. The first finger hooked round an imaginary trigger and moved convulsively . . . once . . . twice . . . three . . . four times. In a flash I had placed him—Matvieff, the man who shot the Tsar and his family, like so many dogs, at night, underground.

My mind flew over the scene that had been described to me time and again during my stay in Russia, flew also to the little underground room in Sverdlovsk, or Ekaterinburg, as it was then called. I had only recently visited the place, now a museum, during a trip to the Urals.

Matvieff had been the officer in charge of the



The building in which the Tzar of Russia and his family were assassinated

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garrison there. One dark night in 1918 the telegraphs had hummed. The Tsar and his family—with instructions regarding their “safe” transit out of the country, came from Moscow. The Royal family were brought to this house—the headquarters of the Soviet, presumably—under the impression they were to be hidden from the wrath of an angry mob, thirsting for their blood, pending “safe” transit through Siberia.

The courteous manners of the bright young commissar completely allayed their fears and blinded them to danger.

Into the lower room they went, one, two, three, four, the fourth Matvieff.

Assurances of safety were given and the Tsar returned thanks.

His thankful words choked into a startled cry of pain as he saw the first flash and felt the sting of the bullet as it swung him round. A scream came from the Tsarina and the young Princess, stricken dumb with horror, huddled in a corner.

There was a dull thud as the Tsar fell writhing in pain, wounded. A second thud as the Tsarina collapsed. Another report as the murderer finished his ghastly work on the first victim. Silence! Two dull footfalls—another report—the Tsarina!—another—the rigid Princess in the corner slides down the wall, subsiding into an inert heap.

Sound of footsteps, an opening door screeched on its rusty hinges. There was the shrill blast of a whistle and running feet. The clamp of many

heavy boots was heard on the hollow wooden floor. Shadows moved to and fro in the half-light of a flickering lantern. Away into the night staggered six burdened men. A seventh following with a petrol tin in his hand. Into the deep woods surrounding the town they marched.

"Halt!" There was a sound of breaking twigs, a ghastly heap was dumped in a little clearing surrounded with tall black trees. The wind soughed eerily through the boughs, mingling with the belaboured breathing of the men as they went about their task of piling the dead.

Came the soft gurgle of petrol flowing from the can, the scratch of a match, muttered curses as it flickered out. Another match struck and the bier was alight. Flames mounted and crackled angrily. Thus did Royalty pass from Russia. This is the story told to-day.

Matvieff collected his nerves almost as quickly as he had seemed to lose hold of himself, the set look vanished. Few have ever seen him thus, probably no one will again.

I suppose I ought to feel flattered. I did not. He left almost immediately—left me . . . thinking, thinking of three Lenin orders—three brilliant spots of colour. Three spots of blood—three pieces of silver.

When I reached Moscow I put up at the Grand Hotel, as I expected to be there for only a day at the most. Next day I went straight to the VSNH building and presented my credentials to the chief

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of the foreign section of the Supreme Economic Council, the official charged with looking after all foreign experts throughout Russia. He looked at my papers with some surprise, then, turning, spoke rapidly to the interpreter.

"What's the matter?" I inquired as that worthy turned to me.

"He wants to know what you are here for, Mr. Westgarth?" the man answered. "He says that they do not know why you came."

"Tell him," I replied bluntly, "that I have been sent here by Zaviniakin, and that I want to know immediately what is expected of me."

A long conversation between the pair followed and at last the interpreter turned to me with a look of resignation and a shrug.

"He says that you had better go back to Leningrad on the next train," he interpreted.

"In that case," I replied grimly, "You can tell him that I won't go back to Leningrad unless to pack my boxes and leave Russia. Tell him that my contract has been broken by Zaviniakin and that I refuse to return to the State Planning Institute and work any more."

This complicated matters considerably. The foreign section chief became very agitated, and asked me whether I would stay at the hotel for a few days, and allow him to look into things. He was very apologetic, and I returned to the hotel, where I remained for a week, telephoning my wife every day to allay the anxiety she naturally felt at my absence.

Two days later I went to the Supreme Economic Council, where I handed in Matvieff's letter. Immediately he saw the writing the secretary went very pale. I asked him what was the matter, and when I could see Orjonikidze. "He is sick," he explained. He looked up hastily, very blue around the eyes, and told me that a very important person had given me the letter and he would see if Mejlauk, the assistant chief, would see me. Some minutes later he came out and told me that Mejlauk would be pleased to see me at 4.30 p.m. I agreed, returned, and was ushered into a handsome office, well lighted, and furnished in the most modern style.

Mejlauk was very pleasant and suave, with an attractive smile, and spoke good English with somewhat of an American accent, which he learned in America under very different conditions to what I found him that day, so a personal friend told me later.

After the usual formal greeting and a cigarette, I came quickly to business. "I have been fooled about in this country too long," I told him, "and I want to know where I stand."

"Oh, don't look at things that way, Mr. Westgarth," he said, with his charming smile. "You are not going to leave us yet."

"Would you like to leave the State Planning Institute?" was his next question.

"As my contract has been broken by your man there I cannot work there any more and all I desire is to get out of the country as soon as possible," I said.

"Well, Mr. Westgarth, I would like you and your wife to go to South Russia and visit Liepitsk, where there is a greater iron and steel works than Magneto-gorsk to be built, as you are already aware. I would like you to take a post there, go and have a look round South Russia."

"There is only one thing would induce me to go there," I said.

"What is that, Mr. Westgarth?" he asked.

"That I be given full control of the construction," I replied. "Put alongside me one of your own people if you like, but pick an honest and conscientious man. If you are willing to do this then we can guarantee to have the works finished on time. I would want British engineers and British machinery to help me also. I have had enough of this graft and mismanagement and stupidity," I replied.

"Russians must always be in control of our industries, Mr. Westgarth," he said, "but don't on that account leave us," he added. "Ring me up in three days and let me know that you will take the trip," was his closing remark.

CHAPTER XIX

THE THIN EDGE

MEJLAUK was thoroughly friendly. His suggestion was that Mrs. Westgarth must be getting tired of constantly travelling about with me, and that she could go to South Russia with me for a holiday. After, I could go to Liepitsk, and leave her in the friendly warmth of Russia's best climate. He apologised for the necessity of having a Russian nominally in command at the works, but explained that this was one of the Republic's strictest rules, and it must be adhered to. I remained firm.

I then asked that a prompt settlement of my affairs and finances be arranged, and that Zaviniakin be communicated with in Leningrad.

We were well ahead with our packing when Zaviniakin telephoned and asked me to visit him at the State Planning. His first words were an attempt to persuade me to stay, and he said that I would be made thoroughly comfortable if I remained with the State Planning. He made no attempt to explain his *volte face*, and I told him bluntly that I was determined to leave. After that he informed me that my financial affairs had been gone into,

and that I had only the ridiculous sum of 25 roubles to draw. No sooner had I heard that than I went immediately to the cashier and told him that I would settle financial affairs in Moscow. My return journey to Moscow was then arranged and I returned to my rooms, where we sent for the Customs officials to examine our baggage.

The Customs officials were at first adamant on retaining my tracings and drawings. Miss Peters came in very handy here, however, and told them that she would be responsible for me. Her father's name carries such weight that no further opposition was raised, and we left that evening for Moscow. We put up at the Grand Hotel as before, and the next day I went to the Supreme Economic Council to settle the financial question, and to arrange for our trip to London.

Something must have happened since my last visit, for Averom, who took Peter's place at the N.K.R.K.I. sent for me and asked me why I was leaving, while later Ossersky, of the Foreign Trade section had a look through the specifications and photographs of the rolling mills I had been pushing for British interests. Whilst I was talking to Ossersky he excused himself and picked up the telephone. Apparently he was speaking to Mejlausk and I heard him say in English, "Don't let Mr. Westgarth leave Russia."

After this conversation he turned to me with a smile and to this day I still wonder whether that lapse into English was accidental or for my special benefit.

Exactly a week later, just as I was preparing to visit the Supreme Economic Council again, a man named Nikitin called at the hotel and announced that he was instructed to hand over our tickets and a cheque in settlement of my affairs. He had with him two second-class tickets to London, and a cheque on a Berlin bank. I looked at them in his outstretched hand, but did not even touch them.

"Take them back where you got them," I said, "and tell your employers from me that they must keep to their contract. One clause provides for international first-class travel, and another that my money is to be paid into Barclay's Bank in Fenchurch Street, London."

The fellow became abject and whined that he dared not go back, but I insisted. During this scene, my old friend Jackson and others had sat in my rooms listening. The old Communist was furious, but strongly advised me not to go to any British officials. Next morning came a further insult in the shape of a letter in which it was stated that the State Planning would take no responsibility for my return journey, and that I must get to London as best I could.

By 9.30 next morning my friend Jackson was at my rooms asking me to go to the O.G.P.U. with him. "I'll come with you," I said, "and bring May Peters."

They had no difficulty in getting direct to Sludsky, who was as cordial to me as on the last occasion on which we had had the lengthy interviews in his

office. His first remark was, "Well, Mr. Westgarth . . . more trouble?"

"Yes," I replied. He asked for details. I launched into a sketch of the difficulties. His face became livid with anger and he excused himself. Turning to a battery of telephones on his desk, he grasped one and gave some instructions. There was a few seconds wait . . . tense seconds . . . and I heard his voice calling "Gurievitch, Gurievitch. Da! Da! (yes, yes) M. G. Gurievitch."

I was not surprised. I knew this man had been a source of trouble to me, especially during the latter days. He was, in fact, indirectly if not directly, the cause of all the muddle in getting my settlement. The ensuing conversation ran something like this:

"Is that Gurievitch? What is all this I hear of the difficulties placed in Mr. Westgarth's way? Why has he not been given a cheque on an English bank?" The answer, so I was told later, was "for economy's sake." Sludsky continued. "For economy's sake?—what about all the economies Mr. Westgarth brought to the U.S.S.R.? You seem to have extraordinary methods of economising. What? What do you mean? He is a dangerous man? You will telegraph the money to London at once, see that everything is made clear for him! Do you understand? . . . Tak (So) and Taverish (comrade) do *not* forget! Good day."

During this conversation he had been using his free hand dialling another telephone and speaking intermittently to someone else, muffling the receiver

of one phone on his chest as he spoke into the other. He was in fact being told what was being said by the other inmates of Gurievitch's room during the telephone conversation with him, by some agent listening in in some other part of the VSNH building. So much for the efficiency of the O.G.P.U.

Sludsky slammed the phones down on their receivers and turned to us again smiling and announced: "Any difficulties are now removed. But Mr. Westgarth, why are you leaving Russia?"

"You have already heard my story," I replied. "I think if you do not know the rest you will be able to guess easily. No headway can be made. You do not want Englishmen or their machinery here. And what is worse my nerves are in such a state that if I do not get back to more normal conditions of living I have not the slightest doubt I shall have a complete breakdown. Life in Russia to-day is made up of intrigues, troubles and strife. Every minute of the day shows some new mischief, and it does not get better; it gets worse. I tell you quite frankly you do not stand for the Ideals you are supposed to represent. There is more trouble here than in any other country in the world, Can you wonder I am leaving? How I have managed to stick so long is a mystery."

"Mm!" he murmured. "You do not seem to have a very pleasant idea of Russia or Russians on the whole, Mr. Westgarth."

"No, I have not, but I have sympathy with them," I answered. "For whilst they are divided against

themselves, they are ruthlessly being exploited by unscrupulous power seekers who love their own country only enough to help it on the way to ruin."

He dropped his eyes and was silent for a few moments and then said, "You have not met the right people."

"Well," said I, "who have I still to meet? I have met the worker, Communist Party members, Red directors, members of the Industrial O.G.P.U., members of the Supreme Economic Council, and lastly I have met you. I still say there is no heart in your system, and if there are others to meet where are they?"

"Well," said Sludsky, "I cannot answer you, but I do not want you to go back to England. However, I realise you are set upon it this time. But what are you going to tell the people you know when you get there?"

"I am going to tell them the truth," I answered, "nothing more, nothing less."

He looked dismayed. It showed plainly on his features. He moved on his chair, and then continued. "Now Mr. Westgarth, I want you at least to keep friendly with the firms you have introduced to the U.S.S.R. I can definitely state that we are going to place large orders with some of them in a very short time."

"How am I to believe this?" I asked.

His fingers drummed on the desk. "I want you to go back to your hotel," he said, "and wait for a

few days. May Day (Labour Day) will be here soon. Stay and see the processions and rest yourself."

"But," I interposed. "Who is going to pay for all this?"

"We will pay all your expenses," he said. "Wait a few days longer. We will phone you and place a proposition before you which we hope you will accept. Do you agree?"

I pondered a few minutes and finally accepted. So we stayed in Moscow for a while and saw the wonderful pageant on the First of May. On the third day came a telephone message asking me to go to the O.G.P.U. at once.

I did so and was received by Sludsky's two assistants, Goodsaid and Verom. One of them spoke excellent English so an interpreter was dispensed with.

"We have instructions from Sludsky to place before you a proposition."

"Yes," I said. "With regard to these firms in England."

They continued. "He hopes you will not go back to England and wreck the possibility of our doing business with them."

"But I have no such intention," I answered.

"Well, he wants you to go home and help us with them."

"But," I objected. "I shall have other things to attend to. Do you think I am a charitable organisation?"

"Oh no!" laughingly answered Verom. "We

are willing to pay you for your trouble," and he named a sum.

The proposition seemed fair enough, but I wondered if there were any tags attached to it, so I asked them. They answered me with another question: "Would you be willing to inspect machinery which was coming to this country?"

"Yes," I answered.

"Would you be willing to travel to America, France and elsewhere?"

"I see no reason why I should not," I said.

"Would you accompany commissions of Russian engineers during their trips abroad?"

"Certainly, so long as their business is legal."

They smiled. "Would you help them—like this—say—we had an engineer who could not get into America."

"Well?"

"Would you allow him to use your passport?"

"I definitely would not! I will do anything open and above-board but I will have nothing to do with your intrigues, please understand that once and for all!"

"Well please forget we mentioned it at all."

These questions went on for a short while longer, then came another feeler: "There is a possibility that in your capacity as a consulting engineer you will come across much information which is very valuable, yes?"

"That is true," I answered.

"Supposing you got to know something about

munition factories or shipyards, would you forward this on to us? We would pay you well."

"I would not," I answered. "I have already told you that I will do anything for you in the way of clean and honest business, but I will not be a spy. What is more I do not want to hear any more of these suggestions."

This agitated them somewhat, and they begged me to forget it.

It was then arranged that I should go home and create goodwill amongst British firms. I interposed at this juncture and said, "Where is the guarantee of good faith?"

"Here," said Verom, and placed in the desk on front of him a pile of dollar notes.

"Now comes the question," I said. "How are you going to get in touch with me in England?"

"We have already arranged that," said Verom. "About two weeks after you arrive in England you will receive a telegram from Berlin, giving you an address to which you may forward your first report. A little later, someone will visit you from Berlin."

"How will I know the sender of the telegram?" I asked.

"He will sign part of your own name—John Robinson. Thus you will know him."

This was all very mysterious and I smiled broadly when they mentioned the *nom-de-plume*.

Sludsky saw me himself the next day, to wish me good-bye. He warmly shook me by the hand and said: "Whenever you wish to come back to

U.S.S.R. let us know and we will open the doors for you . . . Good-bye . . . and I hope you do good business for us . . . Good-bye, Mr. Westgarth. This was the last time I was to see this strange figure behind the scenes.

At the station to see us off that night was poor old Fred Jackson, and with a tremor in his voice I could sense that he would have been glad to accompany us. As he shook hands, he turned and told me quite sincerely :

“ Mr. Westgarth, I’m sorry you’re going, but this is no place for you. It’s all right if you know what they want, and don’t mind how you go about getting it for them, so I don’t worry much. Now then don’t forget, Sludsky’s your friend, and if you get into any difficulties through them not sending your money you write to me, and I’ll put it right. Don’t write to him direct, for he’ll never get your letter.”

This I promised to do, and my last memory of Moscow, is that of the gaunt, grey old Communist standing like a spectre in the pale light of the station lamps. In a way I thought at the time, he is symbolic of the Russia which people never see. Tourists come and go, Labour members from all parts of the world do their conducted Tours, yet they depart, and think not of those gaunt people who work and starve the year round to satisfy the wild desires of fanatics. And always, those people must remain. Never can they leave that dark land, where there is no light of Liberty, no faint glimmering of hope.

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Small wonder that we sighed with relief as the train sped through the night. It is little surprising that we did not breathe freely until the train had crossed the Border, and we found ourselves once again beneath the curse of Capitalism, and groaned once more beneath the oppression of Individualism.

CHAPTER XX

THE SOVIET PLAYS WITH ME TO THE END

FOURTEEN days after our arrival in London came a telegram from Berlin as promised. "Please send future address and letters to Post Box No. — Berlin. N—— John Robinson."

I decided to take up the business in earnest, for I had been in some doubt that I would ever hear from Russia again, so I did as they asked—incidentally spent a great deal of money in the process. I then wrote Berlin and asked the mysterious "John Robinson" to come over as soon as possible, and to send money as my funds were running low. A couple of weeks later an air mail letter arrived from Berlin in which the writer apologised for not having answered my letter sooner, and continued :—"Owing to important business I had to leave Berlin hurriedly some few weeks ago and did not return until a few days past. We will send money at an early date and visit you personally soon." The letter was signed "John Robinson."

Some weeks went by but no one appeared and the missing money was equally conspicuous by its absence. This was getting ridiculous, so I decided to make a call at the Communist offices in King

Street. I did so and was introduced to a "Comrade Pollitt" who promised to cable to Moscow direct in code.

A few days afterwards I called at my bank and found that a mysterious caller had placed to my account the long awaited money. The bank officials could not tell me who had passed the money over the counter.

A few more weeks passed and then, as from the blue, another letter descended upon us from Berlin, asking me to go there during the next two weeks. I was intrigued by all this mystery, and decided to see the thing through to the end, although at the time we had very little money left. My wife and I travelled to Berlin and announced our arrival by sending a letter to the post box address as advised. One day passed, two, three, the days drifted into a week and longer, still no acknowledgment. Then funds ran out altogether. We were in a terrible plight, with a hotel bill to face.

I went to the Russian Trading House in Berlin, the "Handelsvertretung." There I gained admission by displaying my identification card from the Industrial O.G.P.U. which I had managed to retain on leaving Russia and demanded to see someone in authority. My wife and I were taken to an ante-room and a few moments later a man walked in and addressed me.

"Are you Mr. Westgarth?"

I nodded.

"I am on a visit from Arcos, Bush House,

London," he told me. "I have been sent by the head of the imports department to see what I can do for you. Do not be afraid, I am used to secrets. If you wish to speak to me confidentially you may do so, for I am much used to secrets."

This amazing man and his "secret complex" would have caused me unending merriment at any other time, but now I asked him shortly who he was. "Oh, I am from Bush House. I am a responsible official in Bush House," was all he answered.

"Your name," I queried.

"Ach so. It is Beresnikoff."

"I would prefer to see the head of the imports, personally," I said.

"But, but, cannot you tell me?" he spluttered.

"No, it is much too important," I answered.

He shrugged his shoulders and disappearing through the doorway, re-entered, a few minutes later and beckoned us to follow. We were taken to the head of the imports department, a man I met two years previously, but he did not remember me as this time he claimed he could not speak English. I produced my credentials and asked him if he knew anyone in the O.G.P.U. He mentioned several names and I asked him if he knew Sludsky.

"Yes, yes," came the ready reply. "He is a personal friend of mine."

"Good," I said. "Describe him."

He did so to my satisfaction.

"Now what is your errand?" he queried. Whereupon I produced the letters I had received

from the mysterious person "John Robinson." He evinced no surprise whatever and I had a strong suspicion that he knew more about "John Robinson" than he pretended. I explained my position.

"I will arrange an interview to-morrow with a responsible official who has just come from Moscow," he said. "To-morrow—goot?" and he bowed us out.

The next day found us in the ante-room of his office, where he greeted us with the following dialogue, his face wreathed in smiles.

"Ach! Goot! Money, money!" Then he vanished through the doorway and returned a few minutes later with a tall, dark, well-dressed man who towered over his little companion like a big brother. He was introduced to us as a Mr. Guisenberger. He invited us to follow him and led us through a long dark corridor. Unlocking a door at the far end he motioned for us to enter, and after we were seated he asked:

"What is your business?"

I countered with "Who are you?"

"I cannot divulge my real name to you, or my position. I am sorry," he said hollowly.

I prepared to leave at once, but he motioned me to be seated and grasping the telephone, spoke to someone. The result was astounding. He turned to me with a smile.

"I have to say John Robinson," he exclaimed and grinned slyly.

"Why all this mystery?" I asked.

"I cannot tell you," he said, "because I do not know any more than you do. But if you will leave any letters relevant to this business I will see what can be done. We are in telegraphic touch with Moscow and will let you know the result as soon as possible."

I handed over to him the specifications for tube rolling mills, prices, etc., and also letters. Further I told him just how we were situated financially.

He took the specifications and letters at the same time telling me that he had a little money for me.

"But," said I, "What about my hotel bill? That would not pay half of it."

That was all he could give me at the moment, so he told me, but he would see that I got some more soon. We left. Three days later he arrived at my hotel, asked me to be patient for a few days longer and promised to send money soon. "Then you can return to London and all will be settled satisfactorily" he concluded.

Three days later, at 8.30 in the morning, a telephone call came through for me from the Trading House.

"Is that Mr. Westgarth? Well I have to tell you that nothing can be done, and my advice is to get to London as quickly as you can . . . leave Berlin at once."

I asked him what he meant. How could I travel to London without money? and added that I would be up at his office immediately.

"I am sorry; I will not see you, no one will see

you, please leave Berlin at once and go to London . . . Good-bye . . . good-bye," and he rang off.

I was at his office in half an hour, and I got in. Evidently they had forgotten to acquaint the guards at the entrance, for again I showed my identification cards and proceeded to the lifts.

My wife and I sat in the ante-room for three hours ; the lady secretary of the head of the imports department went into her chief's office several times, but only came out weeping. It was all to no avail. I told them I was going from there to the British Consulate.

This we did and the result was that after much trouble my wife and I got to London. Incidentally we tested some of the promises given to us before going to Russia . . . the promises were not worth the breath used to give them and I still keep the cables as proof.

The hotel proprietor was very nice about it all and allowed us to leave with all the help he could give me.

One more experience we were to have of Communism before we arrived in England—" Comrade Pollitt " found his way to the train on our departure from Berlin. Seeking information. He laughed heartily. He did not seem to think we had much to worry about, and could not believe we were bankrupt.

" Why, your wife is smiling," he said. " Ladies don't smile if there is trouble." The usual attitude

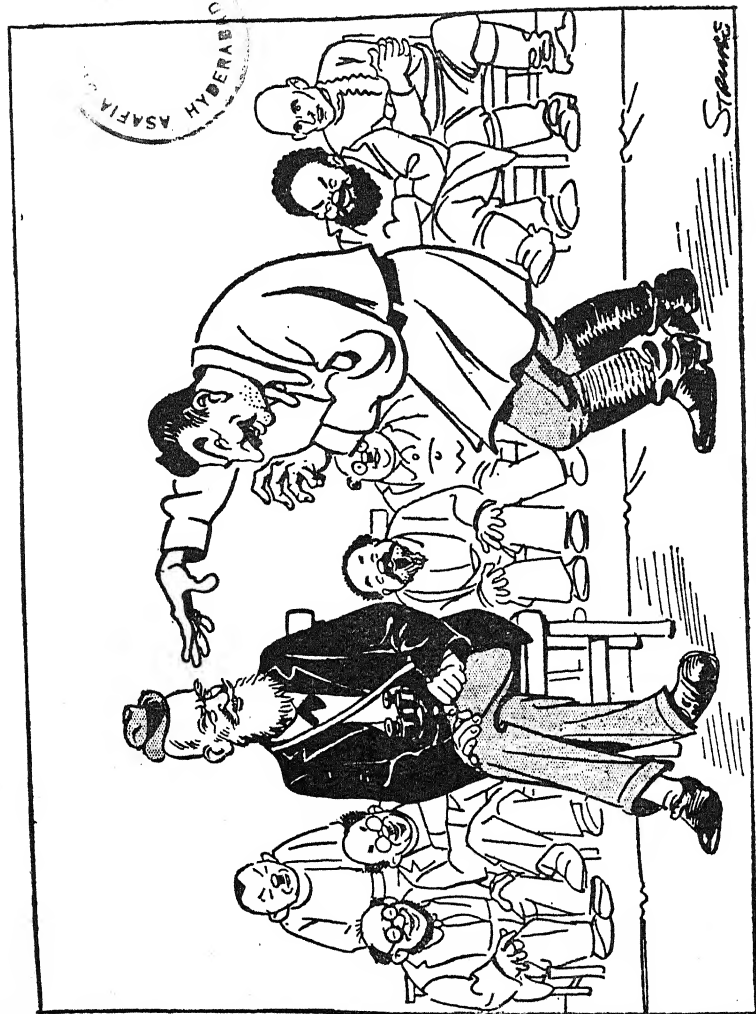
THE SOVIET PLAYS WITH ME TO THE END

of the Communist ; the belief that no one is sincere but themselves.

This was the gratitude meted out for all the real economies taken to Russia extending over millions sterling.

Pollitt alighted from the train at the Hook of Holland . . . I have never seen him since. Thus ended my last experience of the O.G.P.U. and Russia.





Stalin hypnotising Mr. Bernard Shaw
(From a cartoon by "Strube" in the *Daily Express*)

APPENDIX A

HOW STALIN BLUFFED MR. BERNARD SHAW AND MR. SHAW'S REPLY

Daily Express, June 13th, 1932.

AT Oxford recently Mr. Bernard Shaw again sought to enlighten us with some of his experiences of conditions in Russia under the Soviet régime.

But when Mr. Shaw visited Russia last year he was completely fooled by a means which had previously been employed on me, and which I have since seen practised on many visitors to that country.

Did Mr. Shaw think that he had seen the real Russia?

The real Russia I saw during two and a half years is a country of squalor, filth, dumb suffering, and steady starvation. As an official advisor to the Russian Government I have inspected steel works in Siberia and in the south as well as in the neighbourhood of Leningrad and Moscow, and the story is always the same; filth, squalor, disease, suffering starvation.

When I made my preliminary few weeks' visit my impressions were different. Before undertaking any official appointment my son and myself were given a six week's tour to see how we liked the conditions. The proposition seemed fair and we found ourselves in the U.S.S.R. being shown round model state institutions just like Mr. Bernard Shaw. We were taken to the theatres, just like Mr. Bernard Shaw, we were given the late Tsar's box at the Bolshoi, the State Opera House, just like Mr. Bernard Shaw.

The management of the Hotel Europa in Leningrad placed the best room in that establishment at our disposal.

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It was the room which was afterwards occupied by Mr. Bernard Shaw. Hosts of people whom we had never seen before came to visit us at our hotel and introduced themselves, and we were given no time to think of a possible other side to all this.

The daily round started at eight and ended in the early hours of the next morning. We were assured that it would cost us nothing and that we were the guests of the Soviet Union—and the next day a huge roll of paper money was handed to us for incidental expenses.

If, like Mr. Bernard Shaw, we had returned to England and left it at that, I imagine we would have retained the same valuable impressions as those for which Mr. Bernard Shaw now boasts that he was paid a dollar a word.

Unlike Mr. Bernard Shaw, however, we did not content ourselves with admiring at a distance, but returned to Russia and tried to work there for two and a half years.

This time we did not confine our investigations to controlled journeys in the environs of Leningrad and Moscow. We saw the real Russia, a depressed, cowed, squalid, starving country. Incidentally when we had been there three months we were charged up with the hotel account of that preliminary six weeks tour—roughly six hundred pounds.

About four months later, after sending a strongly worded note to the Directorate on the appalling conditions in which the workers lived in Siberia, we returned to Moscow, and in that city and Leningrad we saw during the next two years many tourists come and go. We saw them bamboozled as Mr. Bernard Shaw was bamboozled, as we ourselves were bamboozled during that preliminary visit.

The hotels became overcrowded—old ones were renovated. The best hotels were enlarged at enormous expense. New ones were planned and erected feverishly.

Foreign money rolled into the Soviet coffers . . . the Soviet was pleased . . . the offices of the State Tourist

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agencies all over the world were enlarged and redecorated on the most modern lines, and the "in-tourist" agency became a thriving asset to the Union. Tourists came into Russia in droves. Hundreds of guides were employed.

These guides are drawn from "Intelligent Bourgeoisie," who through fear and necessity call themselves the "Intellectual Proletariat"—those same gentlemen who gave Mr. Shaw all those valuable statistics.

They work for the Soviet Union because they cannot leave Russia. They cannot leave Russia because they are not trusted members of the Communist Party. Their every move is watched by agents of the O.G.P.U. They are daily in fear of death.

As time goes on, then, we find that food becomes shorter and shorter . . . the ordinary people are reduced to the very minimum of the necessities of life . . . even the foreign specialist working in the Union feels the pinch . . . but the glimpse into the huge dining-rooms reserved for people like Mr. Shaw is a revelation. Finer "spreads" could not be found in the most expensive hotels in any part of the world.

There are three sections to the restaurants in all big Russian hotels—one for tourists, one for foreign specialists and one for the more gifted and richer "intellectual proletariat."

These last named stand in queues awaiting their turn outside the entrance, as there is only limited room. The poor Russian eyes the entrance enviously, and tramps his weary way to the nearest bread queue of "Stalovia" or "Stew house," where, if he is patient and waits long enough, he might be able to procure a plate of something which bearing the name of "Stchi" (cabbage soup) resembles dirty bath water more than any other liquid.

The cabbage soup as often as not is made from grass with the addition of a little foreign matter, beetroot or fishes' eyes being the most usual.

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The preparations for Mr. Bernard Shaw's visit were, as may readily be imagined, even more elaborately planned than those for other tourists. A few days before Mr. Shaw's party arrived, the huge bath houses were closed to the general public and carloads of children were transported from the schools to these places of cleansing, thoroughly washed and polished, and returned to be reviewed by the sightseers.

"How ridiculously clean the children are in Russia!" remarked Lady Astor, who was in the party.

The people to whom Mr. Bernard Shaw was to talk were thoroughly schooled and rehearsed, and given a friendly hint that the O.G.P.U. would keep a fatherly eye on them. The interpreters were drilled in their parts, but of course they knew them pretty well already. Their orders are quite simple—to watch their man and lose no opportunity of instilling propaganda.

If the foreign visitor complains, the interpreter suffers—a reprimand for the first offence, imprisonment for the second, and death for the third.

My own interpreter during the later part of my residence in Russia was a relation of the late Imperial family. He gave me a lot of information. Poor fellow, he died in hospital of poisoning.

Frenzied preparations always herald the advent of distinguished visitors.

During an invasion of "Americanski Bourgeoisie" all the taxi-cabs in Moscow were commandeered. The same thing happened in Leningrad on a bigger scale, where they commandeered both the omnibuses and the taxi-cabs at the same time.

The result was ludicrous in the extreme. Dozens of taxi-cabs crowded with tourists flew through the streets, the omnibuses lumbering on behind, only stopping at various places of interest . . . a guide with a megaphone treating his listeners to such delightful fragments of information as "here was shot in the most merciless manner one of

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the martyrs of the proletarian Revolution, Comrade So-and-So."

The tourists were rushed here, rushed there, rushed back to their hotels, and rushed, still in batches, up to the restaurants where they were rushed through their dinners and rushed out to the theatres.

So it goes on month after month, and money is made, and the profits go to make the mechanised State of which the Soviet rulers dream as commanding the world one day.

But the workers still remain toiling and sorrowing, most of the time hungry, waiting in queues like dumb oxen. In days gone by money could at least buy them the necessities of life, now the value of it is practically nil—even when there is anything to buy.

Poor Bernard Shaw—it is pretty rough on a man who has fooled the most brilliant society in the world, so often as he to be in turn so completely mocked, fooled and led by the nose by a few Jewish artisans and Russian peasants.

MY REPLY

By George Bernard Shaw

It seems a pity that Mr. Westgarth, after spending two and a half years as a Government inspector in Russia, should have nothing more to tell us than the common drivel about visitors being hoodwinked, which every needy journalist in Europe invents to make his copy saleable to anti-Soviet newspapers without having set foot in Russia.

Are we to take it as an example of the hoodwinking that his interpreter was a relative of the late Russian Royal Family?

Of course there is dirt, poverty and ignorance in Russia, as I have been careful to remind my readers and listeners, just as there are one hundred thousand people in London living in overcrowded one-roomed tenements of the most abominable and insanitary indecency.

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The dirt, poverty, and ignorance are Russia's inheritance from the Capitalist system. What we want to know is how the Russians are getting on with their plans for putting an end to such horrors. Our Plan is to reduce wages and raise prices and rents. As it is evidently not a success, we are anxious to learn how the diametrically opposite plan of the U.S.S.R. is succeeding, and how it works.

It is not very helpful to be told that all the people who have been struck by the extraordinary progress of the Russian experiment during the last few years are fools who imagine they are seeing how the workers live in Russia when they are being shown the great art collections in the Hermitage or dining with American tourists in the big hotels at four pounds a day.

Mr. Westgarth's article may gratify some ill-feeling of his own against the Soviet State, and may help to intensify the very mischievous public ill-feeling in which so many newspapers are already recklessly trading. But all he tells us of the cause of his ill-feeling is that Communism has not yet rescued the whole hundred and sixty millions of Russians from poverty, almost as uncomfortable, except for its hopefulness, as that which exists, say, in South Wales, where American visitors who are familiar with conditions in the United States tell the people that they are so well off compared with the American miners that they do not know what real poverty is.

APPENDIX B

MR. SHAW'S SECOND REPLY AND MY ANSWER

THE REAL RUSSIA

MY REPLY TO MR. WESTGARTH

(The world-famous dramatist who recently toured through the U.S.S.R. and gave a favourable report.)

N OBODY seems, so far, to have taken in the full significance of Mr. Westgarth's statement that when I visited Russia last year I saw, not the real Russia, but an elaborate show staged for my special benefit, like the operatic Russia staged for Catherine II by Patiomkin when he took a holiday tour through her dominions.

If Mr. Westgarth is right, then all I can say is that the Soviet Government has achieved a feat of which no other Government in the world is capable.

Just think of it.

According to Mr. Westgarth, the Russian Government, at a fortnight's notice (for my journey was unpremeditated) built two great cities, presumably of *papier mâché* and painted canvas, each swarming with millions of inhabitants, all specially washed, dressed, and fed up for me ; and passed off these two scenic impostures on me as Moscow and Petersburg (the name Leningrad is inappropriate and has caught on very imperfectly).

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And this had to be done so thoroughly to avoid detection that I could not stop my motor-car without warning to step unexpectedly into a church or a police court, or take a babies' crèche by surprise with Lady Astor, without finding in full swing a service of the Greek Church, a couple of trials, and a supply of specially fattened babies ready for me.

But this was not all. I did roughly about fifty hours of daylight railway travelling in Russia. The Russian Government, to delude me, had to provide at all the stops, not only flourishing provincial towns and cities and villages, but crowds of sham passengers chaffering with sham peasants selling food, sham bystanders, and sham children, to mask the starvation and squalor of the Real Russia.

When I say that I was completely taken in, it must be remembered that as a professional playwright of forty years' experience, I am an expert in theatrical illusion, and know all the tricks of the actor, scene painter, property man, and producer inside out.

To have deceived me is a triumph of Soviet administration.

One trick in particular completely beats me; and Mr. Westgarth makes no attempt to explain it. How did the Russian Government, with the Russian children and adults all starving, manage to fatten up so many for me at such short notice?

I did not see a single undernourished person in Russia, young or old. Were they padded? Were their hollow cheeks distended by pieces of indiarubber inside?

If this is the explanation of the absence of emaciation in the clothed people of the streets, how about the many hundreds whom I saw every day in Moscow in the centre of repose and culture, sunbathing and swimming in Lido costumes which revealed every possible degree of plumpness; or in the country as the train crossed the rivers, where the Soviet had tastefully introduced groups of figures, adult and juvenile, who were no doubt intended to be

'Урок приличия

Рис. Бор Ефимов.



Mr. Bernard Shaw chastising Mr. Westgarth for his outspoken comments on Russia, in a cartoon from the Moscow paper, *Izvestia*

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“ noble and nude and antique ” and were certainly nude and robustly muscular.

The children who were specially shown to me may have been washed and dressed up for the occasion, as Mr. Westgarth declares they were ; but the boys had nothing on but the most exiguous bathing slips, and there was no getting over the fact that they had plenty of tallow on their ribs ; the girl's ribs were not visible ; but they could have lived for a fortnight on the chubbiness of their calves.

I photographed them, and my photographs, which were published in *Nash's Magazine* here, are not in the least like the terrible photographs of English starved children which are sent to me every year with appeals for help from English charities which have sprung up to rescue little unfortunates from the worst horrors of western Capitalism and democracy.

How was it done ? Is there a Red magic that can produce illusions that are beyond the utmost art of Elstree and Hollywood ?

The most plausible explanation is that I was hypnotised, and only imagined what I saw. And yet there are difficulties in accepting this.

I can hardly believe that Stalin hypnotised me, for I saw him only at the very last moment before I left ; and as he is rather a busy man he can hardly have had time to pursue me in disguise through the streets making secret passes at me all the time I was there.

It is true there may have been relays of hidden hypnotists at work ; but if so, why did they not make a better show for me, since the utmost prosperity and magnificence would have cost no more than commonplace shabbiness.

They might at least have made all the women beautiful and all the men's boots look new. They might have repainted all the shops. They need not have grotesquely overcrowded the trams nor put so many people to sleep in the same room. But perhaps that was only their art-

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fulness, lest I should overdo my praises of the new dispensation.

I am sorry for Mr. Westgarth. It is clearly not his fault that when he returned from Russia he found a literary market greedy for tales of starvation, squalor and slavery in Russia.

Yet when we are forced to choose between believing that what I saw was either a colossally expensive theatrical imposture or a hypnotic delusion, and believing that Mr. Westgarth is simply telling anti-Communist editors what they want and are ready to pay for, I am afraid some of the more cynical of your readers will take the line of least resistance.

For my own part, I am inclined to suspect that Mr. Westgarth's standards are so high that what seemed to my modest scale of expectation an enviable promising state of things seemed to him too miserable to be endured.

What he must feel as he contemplates the hard times we are passing through is something that no feeling heart can contemplate without tears.

To,
The Editor,
Daily Express,
8 Shoe Lane, E.C.4.

SIR,

There is something in genius quite out of reach of the common run of men. Here is Mr. Bernard Shaw, a genius if ever there was one—he has said so himself a hundred times, and no gentleman should contradict another—well, here is Mr. Shaw and just look at what his genius has done for him. Not only has it enabled him as a result of a fortnight in Russia, to correct the impressions by which I have been misled after two and a half years in the same delightful locality, but it empowers him to over-ride inconsistencies which would be insuperable to men of meaner spirit.

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Thus in his first reply to my article he informed us, and underlined the statement too, as it were, that not only was there dirt, poverty and ignorance in Russia, but that he was in the habit of pointing out this disagreeable circumstance to his readers and listeners.

And here he is a fortnight afterwards assuring us, and emphasising the statement again too, that he did not see a single undernourished person in Russia, young or old.

If the first statement is true and there is dirt, ignorance and poverty in Russia I suppose that we are intended to assume that Mr. Shaw's eyes were mercifully screened from any examples of the most marked symptoms of the last-named distressing complaint, and that his reiterated remark to his readers and listeners was based on hearsay.

And if this is so, and both Mr. Shaw's statements are correct, I imagine that Mr. Shaw himself must be feeling as puzzled as doubtless are the readers of the *Daily Express*. He must be thinking to himself, "How can it be that I, Bernard Shaw, a man of genius, a world-famed dramatist, a keen observer, did not even see one ill-nourished person, young or old, during my fortnight's visit to Russia?" It is not reason.

Perhaps, whenever he passed such an unfortunate, Mr. Shaw happened to be turning his head to make a remark to Lady Astor about the virtue of cabbage soup or to extol the cleanliness of the children, or maybe his eyes happened to close at the moment in blissful contemplation of the beauties of Communism. But such a series of coincidences imposes too big a strain on human credulity.

Or perhaps Mr. Shaw himself arranged his journeys in such a way that his sensibilities should not be affronted by even one vision of want and starvation. But this suggests a want of candour and honesty which I should be loth to impute to Mr. Shaw.

Or perhaps finally his journeys were so disposed for Mr. Shaw that he should be safeguarded from the unpleasant

surprises indicated—and this, strange to say, strikes me as the simplest solution of what otherwise would be a very strange phenomenon.

And from this question naturally arises another. Did Mr. Shaw himself drive the motor-car from which he stepped unexpectedly into churches, or police courts, or baby crèches? or did he tell the driver which route to follow and say to him:

“Ivan my boy, just drive down into Trudniaya district, will you? I am anxious to have a look at a real Soviet slum.”

Or did he not rather, a stranger in a strange land, take the advice and follow the route of his O.G.P.U. chauffeur?

So also with his fifty hours' daylight travelling. I can hardly think that, even for Mr. Shaw, the train followed any route other than that fore-appointed by the engineers. Of course it was exceedingly obliging of the young Russians to bathe in the near neighbourhood of the railway bridges whence Mr. Shaw could obtain a good view of their muscular development from the train, but when bathers put themselves to this extremity of inconvenience instead of choosing more suitable reaches of the river for their public ablutions, surely it is ungraceful of Mr. Shaw not to appreciate the compliment at its true value?

It probably has occurred to the reader, as it has to the writer hereof, that, if peasants come down to the station to chaffer with passengers—the sly dogs, and in a Communist State, too—it is because they have something to sell, and that, so far from having anything to sell, they have not the necessities of life, there will be no point in coming down to the station to chaffer with the passengers and they will probably stay away.

Last year my wife and I saw over a thousand people waiting in a queue to buy the entrails of dead horses. This was not an isolated incident by any means. The scene was Leningrad, the year that of Mr. Shaw's visit.

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When I went to inspect the works at Kuzneitsk I found all the workers on strike because they were practically starving. I sent back a report to Moscow and refused to go there again until something had been done for the workers. The field engineer and secretary of the local Communist Party were promptly replaced and so far as I know disappeared from history. Three months later I paid my second visit. A sumptuous building complete with every convenience had been erected for the chief engineer and the Red director. The workmen were still starving—but what of that—Mr. Shaw would have been much impressed by the edifice which housed these officials and their personal staffs, and the amount of tallow to be seen on the ribs of these happy people.

I feel I must add a word on behalf of the Editor of the *Daily Express*. So far from pandering to anti-Communist feeling, it has taken six months to find a newspaper sufficiently broadminded to publish the facts.

If Mr. Shaw's feeling heart is really shedding tears in contemplating my case, I hope he will soon recover from this unaccountable anatomical lapse, when he hears, if I may mix a little metaphor on my own, that I find the hard times in this country happy and heartening by contrast with the experiences during two and a half years in Russia.

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MY TWO PARLIAMENTARY ADDRESSES

Two addresses delivered in
THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, WESTMINSTER
By John R. Westgarth

First Address

July 1st, 1932
Room 22, The House of Commons

Second Address

July 7th, 1932
Room 11, The House of Commons

Presiding Member :—

HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF ATHOLL, M.P., ETC.

YOUR GRACE AND HONOURABLE MEMBERS :—

After spending two and a half years in Russia under contract with the Russian Government as Consulting Engineer to the State Planning Institute for projecting iron and steel works for the whole of the U.S.S.R. and also under contract in the same capacity with the Workers and Peasants Inspection, which is a sort of industrial Scotland Yard, and further, being the only Englishman who has ever worked in this capacity for these institutions, I think I can claim to have first-hand knowledge of conditions in Russia.

During February, 1929, I received an invitation to visit

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the U.S.S.R. from the Russian Supreme Council of National Economy. My son and I went to Russia for six weeks and reviewed the industrial possibilities. I saw there huge plans for the steel industry and also what appeared to be enormous chances for British business. At the end of six weeks, the contract being signed, I was asked to consult on the Kuzneitsk Iron and Steel Works in Siberia, to cost approximately the equivalent of £7,500,000.

The Americans had already quoted for this plant. Upon examining their prices, cash terms, by the way, I found that on about fifteen items embodied in the scheme I could make an economy of £1,500,000 by the simple expedient of advising the Russians to place their orders with British firms.

The Kuzneitsk works had been designed by an American engineering firm, the same firm which had in hand the most of the iron and steel works in Russia. I brought back with me to England the completed American schedules. After a short stay in London I returned again the latter end of May, 1929, to Moscow, taking with me the competitive prices quoted by British firms.

Many of the firms are associated with American companies and produce the same machinery, in some cases under American patents in Great Britain. Although these British firms were willing to give credits and had the assistance of the Exports Credit Scheme, despite all my efforts at negotiation the bulk of the business did not come to Britain.

The reason for this was two-fold. First, the intense political enmity of the Russian Government for this country, a bias which must not be overlooked for a moment. Secondly, there was the influence of American engineers, of whom the great majority of "Foreign Specialists" were composed at that time. Many of these engineers were politically in sympathy with the Soviet Government and united in their hatred of this country, whether for

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business or other reasons I cannot say. Here is an instance of this prejudice and this influence.

At the instance of the Russian Government I submitted to them, with the assistance of British trades unions, the applications of 300 highly qualified British engineers willing to work in Russia. Not one of these men were given a contract, the posts being filled by American engineers at a higher rate of salary. Voluminous correspondence is in my possession with regard to those particular negotiations. (The Russian official letter asking me to get applications was handed round to the committee.)

My next point deals with the credits offered to Russia by British firms. I take a few examples from the main which have come my way. The credit terms offered by the General Electric Company, Ltd., to Messrs. Arcos, Ltd., London, on 13th June, 1930, covering a period of 36 months are as follows :—

20	per cent.	-	3 months from date of Order
20	"	-	On shipment
IO	"	-	6 months from date of shipment
IO	"	-	I2 " " " "
IO	"	-	I8 " " " "
IO	"	-	24 " " " "
IO	"	-	30 " " " "
IO	"	-	36 " " " "

This company can offer such long-period credit because of Government support, but still Russia prefers to buy the bulk of machinery from U.S.A., which has no diplomatic relations with them, whose firms have no State backing such as is given in this country, and usually demand *cash* payments. To help you understand this I will now read the copy of a cable I received from New York after asking for quotations for Russian business. It is short and to the point :

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Westgarth, Consultant, Kuzneitskstroy, Tomsk, Siberia.

WOULD BE INTERESTED ONLY IF STEEL WORK WERE FURNISHED BY US TERMS CASH. MACMARSH (MC-CLINTOC-MARSHALL).

Some British firms claim from the Soviet Government initial payment of one-third of the total value of the contract in cash with the order, a further one-third of the value of each consignment as mentioned by the above bill at three months against shipping documents on delivery F/O/B. *English Port.*

These bills are drawn against shipment and bear interest at the Bank of England rate, plus 1 per cent. guaranteed by letter signed personally by the trade representative of the U.S.S.R. in London.

It seems fairly obvious that a firm which receives one-third cash upon signing a contract could safely take any slight risk for the following period against bills in *this country*, if it is so essential to give credits to Russia. I have a letter here which gives these terms (Wellman Seaver Rolling Mill Co.).

Here is another letter which gives the terms offered by another type of manufacturer. The firm in question actually states its willingness to accept 75 per cent. in *unguaranteed* Bills. The guarantor in this case seems to be the British taxpayer.

Another important instance came to my notice during a session of the Head Office of the State Planning Institute, Leningrad. I was asked to attend some conferences at which an American patentee was giving lectures upon his own design of steel tube rolling mills.

Naturally he pointed out that his mills were the best in the world. A German engineer was also present and gave a lecture on German mills and claimed that his were the best in the world. I noticed to my amazement that British

patents were not once mentioned during those sittings—except by me. The fact is, and this is not national bias but proven fact, that British mills are undoubtedly the finest produced in any country and are considerably cheaper than the American mills.

Moreover British firms have recently installed these British mills in the most prominent steel works in the United States of America in which were previously built only the mills of the American whom I have mentioned as lecturing to the Russians !

I conclusively proved these facts to the Council. The result was that the American lecturer at once returned to New York and cabled this London firm to arrange to manufacture his mills in Britain at the workshops of this British engineering firm. I have the copy of the original cable here dated August, 1930. The arrangement was subsequently made.

Thus money paid by the British taxpayer for Exports Credit subsidises the American patentee. Let me explain this more fully. The American manufacturer has made his own arrangements with the Soviet Government to provide them with so many mills. He is in reality the salesman, he is in fact the salesman of 75 per cent of this type of machinery imported into Russia, most of the remaining 25 per cent. being divided between Germany and Belgium. Very, very little is sold direct by British firms in spite of the lower price, the Export Credit subsidy, and the better quality of the material.

The American salesman has his agency in Berlin where is also the headquarters of the Russian Imports Board. He arranges for specifications to be sent from his associated British firms. I have in mind an occasion on which I took to Berlin six specifications for steel tube rolling mills, all to be manufactured by British firms, but five of them manufactured under American patents, the property of the American lecturer to whom I have referred.

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Thus it is our American who is being subsidised by the British Government for the manufacture and delivery of his goods to Russia. He draws a commission from his American Company and another from his British associates for the privilege of manufacturing his mills for export to Russia, such commission being defrayed by the British taxpayer.

I may point out here that orders of this kind will run into millions sterling.

Here is a similar instance from another such company in England. This firm had already quoted direct to the Soviet Government through me, but had thereupon been forbidden by its American principals to supply the goods. Here is an extract stating the fact from the letter :—

June 29th, 1929.

We would point out that in our letter to you of April 23rd we have stated that we are precluded by the arrangement we have with the Morgan Construction Company, of Worcester, Mass., U.S.A., from undertaking contracts for continuous rolling mill machinery for Russia independently of them.

The estimate for expenditure on the steel industry within the next ten years in the U.S.S.R. runs into enormous figures. I have already mentioned one plant which will cost £7,500,000 when completed ; many of the plants are much larger than this and twenty such will be built within the next ten years, if all goes well. I have hurriedly thrown these facts together for your consideration and I think you will have gathered that, as far as the iron and steel industry is concerned, my opinion is that the Exports Credit Scheme is being abused and is bringing no real help to the British manufacturer.

It is my view that if business is to be done with Russia at all, it should be done by great and reputable firms of the standing of Messrs. Dorman Long and Co., Ltd., in

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Britain and of McClintoc-Marshall in America, firms which incidentally categorically refuse to have any credit transactions with Russia.

Such firms as cannot stand on their own feet without Government assistance and support in their dealings with the Soviet State should be merged into larger combinations of the same type as the aforementioned companies—a movement, I may add—already being foreshadowed in America and Russia.

I have also the gravest doubts as to whether the Soviet Government will be able in the future to meet their obligations. It has come to my knowledge that many American engineers are leaving or have already left Russia, their contracts having been broken from the Russian side. The same applies to one or two firms. Now what is going to happen when they start to cancel contracts with firms supported by Export Credit, for I think that is a possibility to be seriously considered.

In May, 1931, they asked me themselves if I thought it possible to raise money from friends who knew me in the U.S.A. or if I would do my best in that way in Britain. Many are becoming disgusted by the general conditions prevailing and the mismanagement which is as bad as ever. Things drift from bad to worse. As a matter of fact they have tried to do more than they can accomplish. If they had done a little at a time and done it well they would be in a better position to grapple with the problems ahead of them.

This is what I say from my own observations and from conversations with responsible people in the U.S.S.R., for I have talked with members of the collegium of the noted O.G.P.U., members of the N.K.R.K.I. (Workers' and Peasants' Inspection), members of the Supreme Economic Council of the U.S.S.R., Red directors and the workers themselves.

My frank opinion is that with the general level of culture now in the Empire second to none, it is high time we did

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our best for our people within the empire limits and one, sure way of helping our taxpayer is by stopping Exports Credit Subsidy for Russian trade, for I think I have proved conclusively that all Russia wants with Britain is her money—neither her men nor her goods, and I do not see why our people should supply commissions for Americans and back a country which denies its people decent conditions and are out to destroy other civilisations.

YOUR GRACE AND HONOURABLE MEMBERS :—

In this second paper I am going to give you a general idea of the colossal waste and mis-management going on within the Soviet Union. In the short time at my disposal I can only give you a few instances that came my way, but I think quite sufficient to show that the whole fabric is rotten from top to bottom.

The first example of mis-management and inefficiency is the very large iron and steel works scheme named Magnetogorsk. This works was planned to have nine blast furnaces, about twenty-eight open hearth furnaces and sixteen rolling mills, and was to have been finished in the Five Year Plan.

The first signs of trouble came to Moscow in July, 1930, about eighteen months after the start. Russian engineers were taking no notice of the advice given by American specialists and the whole scheme was in a tangle. Some little advice was tendered by Moscow, but things did not improve.

About this time I was under contract to the N.K.R.K.I. (The Workers' and Peasants' Inspection) and the Council asked me to go into the matter and make out a programme for the works. This I did and arranged it so that it could be completed within the Five Year Plan but with this headline :

“*Subject to labour being available, materials and machinery being delivered in sequence,*” rather a stiff proposition to start with for Russia !

The Russians were delighted and overwhelmed me with

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thanks . . . their problems were at least solved on *paper*.

I go to the State Planning Institution in Leningrad and in February, 1931, there was great excitement in the corridors of this institution and one of the chief engineers—a Russian—brought me the whole of the American schedules on the Magnetogorsk scheme asking me to go through them again for him and see what could be done.

The scheme had been reduced to such a condition that the Russian engineers at Magnetogorsk had been arrested and the Government had sent a special courier to see what the State Planning could do to get at least one blast furnace going by October, 1931.

Foundations had been put in for the blast furnaces too light for the superstructure and the whole organisation was disorganised . . . engineers had travelled to America and many parts of Germany and Russia regarding the blast furnaces alone, many designs had been made to my knowledge. Just think of the dollars and marks spent in foreign currency by the Soviet for American and German advice, for engineers to travel and for foreign engineers resident in U.S.S.R. for this one job only, and by October, 1931, only getting the minimum in construction with no financial returns in production at all !

There are many such cases which could be mentioned.

My second case is in connection with a scheme which had to be built in the Urals. I was asked in November, 1930, to accompany a Commission to the Ural Mountains to examine the site of a works which had to be built, called Galitsky Field. This site had been chosen in June of the same year by Russian professors. What did I find when I got there ?

The site for the works was 80 metres above the level of the river, every gallon of water would have to be pumped that height for many years, for a works which had to produce in the *initial* stages 2,000,000 tons of pig iron and 1,500,000 tons of finished steel products. Further, there had to be built a town to accommodate some 160,000 people who, of

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course, would need water. I just mention the simplest things.

There was only room for one railway line to feed the town and the works, unless they removed part of the surrounding mountains . . . and finally, the land was solid granite of high marketable value ! This works was to be built only three hundred miles from Magnetogorsk, which I have just mentioned, which also had to produce some 4,000,000 tons of pig iron . . . and an enormous quantity of finished steel products.

Further, in the Ural regions alone, there is to be built the following plants for iron and steel within the next five years as follows :—

Sinarsky ...	...	350,000 tons
Alepievsky	...	4,000,000 „
Tagilsky ...	...	1,750,000 „
Kissolovsky	...	1,000,000 „
Magnetogorsk	...	4,000,000 „
Bakalsky ...	...	2,000,000 „
Total	...	13,100,000 tons

All these works will have only one railway line—the Trans-Siberian—to feed the lot and take away the finished products. Roughly speaking these works are to be built within an area of a thousand miles, which is a comparatively small figure as regards Russia.

Over six months had been spent on preparing designs for the Bakalsky works by Russians, Germans and Americans, with much travelling to and from. . . . Under the existing local conditions and the preliminary costs necessary at the site of the works I naturally persuaded them to cancel the building of the plant at Galitsky Field.

Speaking of railways reminds me of a strange incident which came my way. If it were not so tragic one could

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laugh over it. A "resolution" came to me from the Commissariat of Railways stating that all rolling mills must be re-arranged to enable them to roll steel rails 30 metres in length instead of the average in Russia of about 15 metres, which is, roughly speaking, their standard.

All designs must be altered. If this plan had been carried through it would have been impossible to transport the rails to their destination. How could they negotiate the curves on the railways while in transit?

Here is another instance, the reconstruction of the Moscow Iron and Steel Works. No less than seven commissions sat in council for the settlement of a reconstruction of these works. Several years elapsed during this expensive process. One American firm was asked to consult and give an opinion, as well as a German firm. Nevertheless the decisions of both of these were disregarded by the Russians. They thereupon arranged for one of the Supreme Economic Council to head another commission on the matter.

The result of this council, named the Dolgov Commission, was that the reconstruction of this small steel works had to cost 120,000,000 roubles (£12,000,000) and some 30 odd Russians had to be sent to U.S.A. to be specially trained for the job.

The Workers' and Peasants' Inspection asked me to look into the matter and pass my opinion. Within the space of two months with the assistance of my son and one secretary we gave a new layout and reduced the figure already mentioned by more than one half.

The programme was accepted and the plant is being built to-day.

Can anyone imagine a reconstruction of a small plant to cost £12,000,000? About thirty per cent. of this money had to be spent abroad. But in spite of all the economies accepted, a resolution quite in keeping with the "Russian Ideas not having any value for money" was added, viz.:—"If you need more do not hesitate to make it known later."

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Production in these essential industries is not an economic asset. Pig iron is not yet a commodity which is sold outside the U.S.S.R. It does not bring in foreign currency to the Soviet coffers. Further, gold reserves are not being developed although they have goldfields. Since the Lena Goldfields were taken into Russian management it is not a success and I have a case in point of something like 800,000 roubles being given to some Russian gold prospectors in 1930 who had to investigate the gold-bearing regions of the Far East. By the end of the year no report had come from them. Moscow sent an official to investigate. This man told me himself that nothing had been done. They simply lived on the best they could get in the districts. So much for gold.

Going back to the question of pig iron production in 1931 the Soviet Union produced 4.9 millions of tons of pig iron as against the 8 millions of tons prescribed by the Plan. The original idea was to raise the production during the last year of the Five Year Plan to 17 million tons (1932).

A new plan had to be prepared. Compared with this 17 million tons the new plan for 1932 for 9 million tons is a model of restraint. New furnaces, as I have shown, are being built but building is *not* going according to plan and even this modest figure (9 million tons) will not be produced by the end of 1933, the ORIGINAL date of the Five Year Plan.

Kuibyshev made a notable statement in January, 1931 : "The fulfilment of the Five Year Plan depends on the adequate fulfilment of the Plan in pig iron." These are his words in short, hence it will be seen that the Five Year Plan has failed and is *not* a success as the propagandists would have us believe.

Further, gold is not being produced in the country in any quantity ; foreign currency is spent lavishly on foreign specialists whose advice is not always taken in these industries. Why has this system to be bolstered up with British money when there is our Empire to develop ? Why cannot

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this money and this business interest be turned toward development of the Empire?

A statement from the Birmingham Bureau of Research on Russian Economic Conditions seems at this juncture very enlightening. It reads as follows:

"The financing of Soviet Russia is chiefly undertaken by Great Britain and Germany. The participation of the United States of America in this financing was of a temporary character and of secondary importance."

This strongly supports my contention that British Finance is supporting mis-management and a system which fundamentally has no value for money, and would just as easily repudiate commercial debts as a war debt, whenever that time does conveniently suit them.

But the Plan was abortive and now it is concluded there is only the future hope of misery, suffering and starvation for the tragic Russian people.

In my capacity as consulting engineer to all steel works within the Union I had to observe conditions everywhere. I knew what they were spending, and what their objectives were. Above all, I knew the present state of the Russian people and was in a position to gauge the condition in the future.

The world is signally starved of genuine information on Russia, and the Soviet Government should realise that a world which knows that cheap goods it is purchasing are made by starving men and women is not likely to prove such a good customer. It should also realise that the "glorious" cause of world revolution may seriously be retarded if the people who are to fight Capitalism know that Communism is even more greatly to be feared.

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